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STARS AND STRIPES®

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2015

平成12年4月5日 第三種郵便物認可 (刊行日1月1日及び12月25日休刊)
発行所 星多岐新聞社 〒106-0032 東京都港区六本木7丁目23番17号 定価平価版¥5

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By JON HARPER
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama released his fiscal 2016 budget request Monday, asking for \$534.3 billion for the Pentagon's base budget plus an additional \$50.9 billion for "overseas contingency operations."

For those who don't want to scour federal budget documents, here are eight things you need to know about the president's budget request.

1. It far exceeds budget caps: Obama's budget blows past the caps imposed by lawmakers, by about \$35 billion. Unless Congress changes the law known as "sequestration," the

THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE 2016 DOD BUDGET REQUEST

Pentagon will have to make do with about \$499 billion — 8 percent less than the president wants.

Analysts are skeptical that the White House and a GOP-controlled Congress can reach an agreement about how to pay for higher defense spending.

"There are four paths to increasing defense spending: cut nondefense discretionary spending, reduce entitlement expenditures, add tax revenue, or relax the restrictions on adding to the deficit," wrote Ryan Crotty, a defense analyst at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. "The first two of these solutions are anathema to Democrats, and the last two are anathema to Republicans."

SEE BUDGET ON PAGE 4

Pay modernization panel gets warm reception on Capitol Hill

BY TRAVIS J. TRITTEN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A plan to cut defined pensions by 20 percent will not reduce long-term retention in the military, a panel appointed by Congress told lawmakers Tuesday.

Instead, spreading smaller re-

retirement benefits over troops' careers will result in the same number serving two decades or more, according to the Military Retirement and Compensation Modernization Commission.

The reduction in pensions is one aspect of a retirement and health care coverage overhaul recommended last week by the

committee. The landmark study — the most comprehensive review of pay and benefits since an all-volunteer force was created in the 1970s — received initial praise on Capitol Hill during a hearing of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

"The system we have devised includes the incentives, the flex-

ibility and the choice people want in [the] force, so we feel it is going to be a very powerful retention tool," Commissioner Michael Higgins said.

The panel has proposed modernizing the aging retirement system by offering 80 percent of the current defined military pensions paid after 20 years. In

return, every servicemember would be automatically enrolled in the Thrift Savings Plan and the military would match contributions, similar to 401(k) accounts.

Troops could keep whatever money has accumulated whenever they separate and collect it after they turn 59 years old.

SEE PAY ON PAGE 6

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Look at all the TV series of jewel heists, where you have people wearing masks, flak jackets. And here, we have stockings and high heels."

— Eric Dupond-Moretti, defense lawyer, on a Paris jewel heist in which four men — three wearing wigs and dressed as women — stole 297 pieces of jewelry and 104 watches in less than 20 minutes

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WAR/MILITARY

US reverses course on classified data

Officials say information on Afghan forces' capability was withheld over security concerns

By JOSH SMITH
Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — Facing severe criticism, American military officials in Afghanistan reversed course, announcing they would declassify some information they had only recently classified.

In a statement on Monday, Col. Brian Tribus, a spokesman for U.S. Forces in Afghanistan, said much previously public data had been classified because it was mixed in with other sensitive information. Some of that unclassified data will be broken out from the classified data and again made available, he said.

The Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction complained of an "unprecedented" move by American officials to classify information about the capabilities of Afghan national security forces, or ANSF, and how some of billions of dollars in military aid had been spent. That information had been publicly available for the past six years, SIGAR officials said when they released their latest quarterly report last week.

"A large volume of the data requested by

SIGAR, when viewed alone, is suitable for public release," Tribus said in an email statement.

"However, releasable information was combined with related classified information, requiring it to be published in a classified annex" of SIGAR's quarterly report.

SIGAR officials said on Tuesday they were still analyzing the released data — provided to them in hard copy in Kabul — to determine what information is now declassified. Tribus indicated that details of ANSF capabilities would remain secret.

Such now-secret details shine a light on the foreign-trained and -funded Afghan forces who have taken over responsibility for their country's security. After more than a decade of assistance, amounting to some \$65 billion, security forces face high attrition rates and rising casualties while rampant corruption prevents many resources from ever making it into the fight.

Gen. John Campbell, who commands both U.S. forces and the NATO-led coalition in Afghanistan, made the decision to classify the information. In a memo to SIGAR, he argued that releasing information that describes the

state of Afghan forces would only help the Taliban and other insurgents.

"Just as we classify our own armed forces readiness reports, it is prudent for us as a reliable partner to do the same for the ANSF — especially considering that ANSF commands are now our primary source for that data and it is provided to us in a classified format," Tribus said in his statement. "Again, Gen. Campbell has not changed his position in regard to the importance of protecting ANSF readiness data, which remains classified."

U.S. military officials did not explain why information on ANSF capabilities had previously been unclassified, but they said their decision was backed up by Afghan officials, including President Ashraf Ghani and top defense officials.

Gen. Zahir Azimi, spokesman for the Afghan Defense Ministry, told Stars and Stripes he had seen coverage of the spat between SIGAR and the U.S. military, but he declined to comment or confirm any requests made by the Afghans.

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'American Sniper' film is a misfire in Baghdad

By LIZ SLY
The Washington Post

BAGHDAD — It is not only in America that Clint Eastwood's Iraq War blockbuster "American Sniper" is proving controversial.

After just a handful of sometimes rowdy screenings, the film has been pulled from Baghdad's only movie theater amid complaints from the Iraqi government — as well as viewers — that it "insults" Iraqis.

Similar allegations have clouded the film's release in the United States, though not its box-office success. Critics have hailed its gripping portrayal of Navy SEAL sniper Chris Kyle and his exploits in Iraq as a cinematic triumph. Commentators have denounced it as being simplistic and giving a one-sided portrayal of the conflict.

In Iraq, the movie has come as a reminder of the vast gulf that divides Iraq and U.S. perceptions of the bloody, complicated war, which left more than 400,000 Americans and well over 100,000 Iraqis dead — and is now drawing U.S. troops back.

"It glorifies Americans and makes Iraqis out to be nothing but

"The film makes out that all Iraqis are terrorists — men, women and children — whereas, actually, there are some people who loved the Americans and wanted them to stay to help rebuild our country."

Sarmad Moazzem

Iraqi who worked with the U.S. during the Iraq War

terrorists," said Ahmed Kamal, 27, a teacher, who downloaded the film for free on a pirate website because he didn't want to pay to see a movie in which the hero refers to Iraqis as "savages."

"I wasn't prepared to spend money to see it," he said. "It portrays Americans as strong and noble, and Iraqis as ignorant and violent."

The movie also failed to note that some Iraqis worked with the Americans, said Sarmad Moazzem, 32, who was one of them. He served alongside U.S. troops for five years in an Interior Ministry logistics division and now works as a security adviser at the theater that pulled the film.

"The film makes out that all Iraqis are terrorists — men, women and children — whereas,

actually, there are some people who loved the Americans and wanted them to stay to help rebuild our country," he said. "The movie didn't show any of them."

He listed numerous inaccuracies, such as the identification of Sadr City, the Baghdad neighborhood where Shiite militias battled U.S. troops on numerous occasions, as a stronghold of al-Qaida — which is a Sunni group.

Moreover, a scene in which Iraqis, including a child, attempted to take out the sniper didn't ring true, according to his experiences.

"No one would stick around if there was an American sniper in the area," he said. "As soon as anyone knew there was a sniper, everyone would run and hide."

That scene, in which a child picks up a rocket-propelled gre-

nade launcher, provoked a furious outburst at one of the screenings. Three spectators in the front row jumped up from their seats and started cursing, said Mohammed Laith, 27, who was sitting a few rows behind.

"They were shouting. It's all a lie," and, "You are demeaning our culture," he recalled. When the three refused to sit down, security guards ejected them from the theater, he said.

The manager of the theater, located in Baghdad's fancy new Mansour Mall, said he withdrew "American Sniper" last week after receiving a telephone call from a senior official at the Ministry of Culture warning him that he would face fines and possible closure if he continued to show it. "He told me the film insults Iraqis," said Fares Hilal, whose six-screen cinema opened last year and is the first to offer Iraqis an American-style moviegoing experience.

He immediately complied with the order — but with some regret.

"If we show it, we will be criticized. But if we don't, we lose money," he sighed. "A lot of people wanted to see this film."

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2016 DEFENSE BUDGET

Navy requests more funding, ships, people

By JON HARPER
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Navy is hoping for an 8 percent increase in its budget from last year as the service seeks to bring aboard more sailors and build more ships.

President Barack Obama's fiscal 2016 budget request, unveiled Monday, calls for the Navy to receive \$137 billion for its base budget. That's \$9.7 billion more than it received this fiscal year, and billions more than the Navy will be allowed to spend if the congressionally imposed budget cap known as "sequestration" isn't lifted.

The service is also requesting

\$5.6 billion for "overseas contingency operations," also known as OCO.

At a time when the size of the Army is being slashed, the Navy wants to add about 5,600 people to its active-duty rolls and increase the number of ships in the fleet.

There are currently 323,000 active-duty sailors in the Navy. That number would increase to 329,200 in fiscal 2016 if the Navy gets its way. Navy Reserve end strength would remain roughly the same at 57,400.

At a time of high operational tempo, sailors will continue to see more sea pay, incentive pay for critical skill sets and bonuses for those who undergo extended deployments. Obama has proposed

The aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford transits the James River during the ship's launch and transit to Newport News Shipyard in Virginia for the final stages of construction and testing.



ADAN R. CAMPBELL/Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

Navy purchases eyed with procurement funds

The Navy's request calls for about \$33 billion in Navy procurement funding for fiscal 2016 to buy new ships and aircraft, including:

- 2 nuclear attack submarines.
- 2 destroyers.
- 3 littoral combat ships.
- 1 amphibious transport dock.
- 4 F-35C Joint Strike Fighters.

- 16 P-8A Poseidons.
- 5 E-2D Hawkeyes.
- 3 MQ-4C Triton unmanned aircraft.
- 2 MQ-8C Fire Scout unmanned helicopters.
- Detailed design and construction of the USS John F. Kennedy aircraft carrier (with estimated delivery in fiscal 2018).

that military basic pay and civilian pay increase 1.3 percent in fiscal 2016.

The Navy is seeking a fleet increase from 271 to 282 ships. The USS Gerald R. Ford aircraft

carrier will come into service in 2016, keeping the number of available carriers at 10 while the USS George Washington undergoes refueling. Thirteen other battle-force ships will be deliv-

ered, including two nuclear attack submarines, five littoral combat ships, two joint high-speed vessels, three destroyers and an amphibious transport dock. Three nuclear attack submarines will be retired.

The Navy aims to have a 306-ship fleet by fiscal 2020.

The planned naval buildup comes at a time when China is undergoing rapid military modernization, and its forces pose a growing threat to American dominance of the high seas.

The Navy is playing a leading role in the Pentagon's rebalance to the Asia-Pacific, and the service intends to have 60 percent of its fleet based in the region by 2020.

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Carrier overhaul, new amphibious ship in Navy budget request

By STEVEN BEARDSLEY
Stars and Stripes

The Navy plans to move forward with an overhaul of its aircraft carrier USS George Washington and seek funding for another amphibious ship.

Both requests are part of a \$16.6 billion shipbuilding budget that assumes the repeal or offset of sequestration budget caps, an uncertainty in the new Congress.

They were part of the Defense Department budget proposal released Monday for fiscal 2016, which begins in October.

Navy leaders are asking for \$678 million in funding for a midlife refueling and modernization of the nuclear-powered Washington. The project, estimated to cost \$4.7 billion and take almost four years to complete, has become a focal point of government debates over defense budgeting.

The military had planned to retire the carrier before its overhaul, citing budget caps and a strategic reassessment of the nation's carrier needs.

Dropping the ship would leave the U.S. with 10 carriers in its fleet. Congress opposed retiring the ship, and the military chose to defer its funding request until fiscal 2016, when sequestration caps would return after a two-year budget deal offset them.

The military has asked for \$35 billion in spending above those caps for the coming fiscal year, testing Congress' will to maintain the longer spending levels.

Congress has already set aside more than \$800 million in advance funding for the carrier overhaul, and plans call for the



STEPHANIE SMITH/Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

Sailors prepare to place a new arresting wire on the flight deck of the aircraft carrier USS George Washington in 2012. The Navy plans to move forward with an overhaul of the carrier under a budget proposal released Monday.

Navy to seek the \$3.2 billion balance over fiscal years 2017 and 2018.

The shipbuilding budget also requests \$550 million for the funding balance of another San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock, the 12th ship in a line the Navy had planned to keep at

11, citing high costs and other priorities. The 26,000-ton vessel can carry roughly 800 Marines, their aircraft and landing craft for a variety of operations.

As with the carrier overhaul, Congress set aside advance funding for the ship in recent defense bills, despite the lack of a formal

\$4.7B

The cost of a midlife refueling and modernization of the nuclear-powered USS George Washington. The project, estimated to take almost four years to complete, has become a focal point of government debates over defense budgeting.

request from the Navy. Members designated \$234 million for the ship in 2013 and \$1 billion more in last year's appropriations bill.

The Navy estimates a 12th ship would cost about \$1.7 billion.

The service has appeared ambivalent about the vessel. Shipbuilding boss Sean Stackley told Congress last year that although a 12th ship could provide an "industrial bridge" for amphibious shipbuilders — preserving technical know-how as vessel construction hits a gap in the coming years — the project was eclipsed by other needs.

"[T]hat billion-plus (dollar issue) has to enter into a budget process where we've got other bills that are, frankly, a higher priority," he said.

The 10th and 11th ships of the San Antonio class, the USS John P. Murtha and USS Portland, are expected to be delivered to the Navy in 2016 and 2017.

The new vessel would be a win for the Marine Corps, which has complained it has too few amphibious ships to meet global requirements. The corps says it needs a total of 38 amphibious

ships to meet strategic objectives, but it has compromised with the Navy to accept 33, a number yet to be reached by the fleet.

Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Jonathan Greenert told Congress last March that the Navy had 29 amphibious ships operational at the time.

Another contract would also be a boon for shipbuilder Huntington Ingalls Industries, which has constructed every other ship in the class at its yard in Pascagoula, Miss.

The Navy's shipbuilding budget would continue the annual purchase of two Virginia-class fast-attack submarines and two Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers. It plans a buy of three littoral combat ships, and it continues the design and construction of future aircraft carriers.

The Department of the Navy budget, which includes Marines, also calls for \$16.4 billion in aircraft procurement, including 13 F-35 Joint Strike Fighters and 16 P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft, which replaces the P-3.

Spending caps installed under the 2011 Budget Control Act have been problematic for military procurement programs, which require significant advance planning and long-term funding.

The Pentagon has requested \$535 billion in base defense spending, more than \$35 billion in excess of the budget caps set to take effect. It budgets \$161 billion in combined base funding for the Navy and Marine Corps.

Fiscal year 2016 runs from Oct. 1, 2015, to Sept. 30, 2016.

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2016 DEFENSE BUDGET



SAMUEL KING JR./Courtesy of the U.S. Air Force

A Marine F-35B Joint Strike Fighter seems to hover over the runway as it descends toward the ground during the first short takeoff and vertical landing mission at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., on Oct. 25. The Marine Corps budget request would buy nine of the aircraft.

Marine Corps request reflects return to roots

By JON HARPER
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama is calling for a 7 percent increase in the Marine Corps budget as the service seeks to buy new high-tech platforms while returning to its roots as an expeditionary, emergency response force.

The president's fiscal 2016 budget request seeks \$24 billion for the Marines base budget, an increase of \$1.6 billion. It also proposes \$1.3 billion for Marine Corps "overseas contingency operations," also known as OCO.

About \$1.1 billion of the Marines' budget would go toward procurement as the service focuses on post-Afghanistan missions.

For more than a decade after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, the Marine Corps was engaged in slogging counterinsurgency warfare. The last contingent of Marines in Afghanistan withdrew last fall, and other hot spots have grabbed the Pentagon's attention.

The Marine Corps is in the process of rebalancing to the Asia-Pacific and has been tasked to respond to crises in Africa and the Middle East.

New rotational deployments to Australia are underway, and Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Forces have been sent up

About \$1.1 billion of the Marines' budget would go toward procurement as the service focuses on post-Afghanistan missions.

in Spain and Kuwait to serve as rapid-reaction forces in the event of threats to U.S. people and installations overseas.

Last year, Marines were dispatched to evacuate U.S. embassies in Africa and to reinforce critical facilities in Iraq. In recent weeks, the Iwo Jima amphibious ready group was stationed off the coast of Yemen as political unrest engulfed the capital of Sana'a.

The budget request would buy the service's top-priority items in the new operating environment, including:

■ Nine F-35B Joint Strike Fighters (Marine Corps variant).

■ Two KC-130J Super Hercules aerial refueling aircraft.

■ 19 MV-22 Osprey troop transport aircraft.

F-35Bs and MV-22Bs can take off and land vertically like a helicopter but fly faster like a plane. KC-130Js enable Marines to fly long distances without landing.

During a recent visit to the USS America amphibious assault ship, which was designed to carry the F-35B and the MV-22, Secretary of

Defense Chuck Hagel told sailors and Marines, "Capabilities represented on this ship [showcase] the amphibious possibilities that our Marines are getting back to after 13 years of long war."

The Marine Corps has been shrinking as the U.S. troop presence in Afghanistan decreased. There are now 184,000 active-duty Marines, down from a wartime peak of about 203,000. That number is slated to go down to 182,000.

The fiscal 2016 budget request would keep end strength at 184,000 for at least another year "to pause the recent drawdown path while assessing the impact of the four-year drawdown on small unit leaders in the face of a continued high operational tempo," according to budget documents.

Under the budget proposal, Marine Reserve end strength would see a slight decline, from 39,200 to 38,900.

Obama has proposed that military basic pay and civilian pay increase 1.3 percent in fiscal 2016.

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Budget: Major spending fight to focus on how to pay for potential increase in the Pentagon budget

FROM FRONT PAGE

2. It attempts to limit growth in pay and benefits: Obama is proposing a 1.3 percent pay increase for troops and federal workers. That would be more than the 1 percent bump the past two years but well below the estimated 2.3 percent increase in private-sector wage growth, which, by law, military raises are supposed to match. It would require servicemembers to pay about 4 percent more out-of-pocket for housing over the next two to three years. It would cut commissary subsidies by \$100 million, and patrons could see reduced operating days and hours. It would phase in changes to Tricare call, including a steady increase in Tricare-for-Life annual enrollment fees for retirees age 65 and older, as well as increased deductibles and pharmacy copays over the next decade.

3. The Army would get significantly less than the other service departments: The Army would receive \$126.5 billion; the Navy and Marines, \$161 billion; the Air Force, \$152.9 billion. The active-duty Army would shrink by 15,000 soldiers, while the other services would see no change or grow slightly.

4. The Pentagon still wants to kill the A-10: To save money, the budget request calls for retiring the A-10 Thunderbolt II close-air support aircraft. The A-10, also known as the "Warthog," has significant support on Capitol Hill, and the Defense Department's proposal to get rid of the Warthog went down in flames last year.

5. The DOD wants another round of Base Realignment and Closure: The budget calls for authorization to initiate another round of BRAC to save money by shedding excess infrastructure. But there is little support among lawmakers, who don't want to see bases in their districts get shuttered and their constituents put out of work.

6. Overseas contingency operations money is down but still sizable: The \$5.8 billion request to fund OCO is down from the \$64.3 billion enacted last year, a 21 percent decrease. A major reason for the decline is the significant reduction in troop levels in Afghanistan. But the OCO request funds a number of items that aren't clearly associated with wartime operations, including \$1.3 billion for training and equipping Iraqi troops and Syrian rebels who are fighting the Islamic State group; \$800 million for troop rotations through Europe to reassure NATO allies worried about Russia's resurgence; and \$79 billion for investments in "equipment reset and readiness."

7. There's a major Navy build-up in the works: The fleet would increase from 271 to 282 ships in fiscal 2016. The new USS Gerald

R. Ford aircraft carrier will come into service, as well as 13 other battle force ships. The introduction of the Ford will allow the Navy to keep the number of carriers available at 10 while the USS George Washington undergoes refueling.

8. Modernization money is way up: \$107.7 billion would go toward procurement, a \$14.1 billion increase over fiscal 2015. The Research, Development, Testing, and Evaluation budget would see a \$6.3 billion bump. Much of that money will go toward cutting-edge platforms, including the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter and the V-22 Osprey troop transport, which can take off and land vertically like a

helicopter but fly at airplane speeds.

'Like the president's previous budgets, this plan never balances — ever.'

Rep. John Boehner
R-Ohio

That's why the defense budget that Congress approves might look very different from the one being proposed by the president and the DOD.

It's clear that a major budget battle lies ahead, especially when it comes to nondefense spending and finding ways to pay for a potential increase in the Pentagon's budget.

Speaker of the House John Boehner, R-Ohio, called the overall federal budget proposal more of the same from Obama, criticizing plans for "more taxes, more spending" and more "Washington gridlock."

"Like the president's previous budgets, this plan never balances — ever," he said in a written statement. "While the president's budget is about the past, our budget will be about the future. We will address our government's spending problem and protect our national security."

Rep. Hal Rogers, R-Ky., chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, said the White House proposed tax increases "and other budget gimmicks" knowing full well that they "will never be enacted into law."

"We need a real budget," Rogers said, "one that allows responsible investment in critical federal programs — including our national defense — without breaking the bank and pushing our country further into deficits and debt."

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2016 DEFENSE BUDGET

AF again pushes to retire the A-10

By TRAVIS J. TRITTEN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Air Force again unveiled plans Monday to retire the A-10 Thunderbolt as part of its proposed budget for the coming year.

The Warthog, as it's also known, faces the axe as a way to save money under all the service's budget scenarios, but the Air Force warned that the F-35 Lightning II aircraft, among other key initiatives, are being threatened by a potential cap on defense spending.

However, the Air Force's \$167.3 billion budget plan largely sidesteps impending cuts and instead proposes moderate increases in spending and manpower, which the service says are necessary to recover from sequestration reductions in fiscal 2013 that pinched operations and reduced readiness to its lowest levels since the early 1980s.

"The Air Force is smaller, we're busier than ever, and our aircraft are as old as they have ever been," said Maj. Gen. James Martin, Air Force deputy assistant secretary for budget.

The service needs a bump in funding to recover and keep up its mission after that first round of sequestration two years ago, according to a budget overview released Monday.

The A-10 has been part of an Air Force good-faith effort to cut costs after high military spending during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the sequester caps created by Congress to reduce federal debt. But the retirement has caused a bitter fight involving the Air Force, Congress and servicemembers who praise the aircraft for its close air support on the battlefield. Lawmakers eventually passed a 2015 budget in December that allowed reduced maintenance and flying hours for the Warthogs but barred a full retirement.

Martin, who provided a briefing at the Pentagon, said retiring about 300 of the aircraft is now estimated to save the service \$4.2 billion by 2019. The proposal is still likely to face tough opposition from Warthog supporters in Congress, such as Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz.

Martin said it will be up to the

Air Force to sell the retirement on Capitol Hill. "It is going over there and explaining what we can do with those savings," he said.

The service had once wanted to retire its unmanned Global Hawk force in favor of the older U-2 spy plane for high-altitude reconnaissance. The proposed 2016 budget calls for keeping both aircraft, including modifications to the drone's Block 30 variant to keep it flying past 2023. But a sequestration budget cap would force it to divest in the Global Hawk Block 40 variant and forgo the upgrades to the Block 30, the service said.

Funding for the F-35 advanced fighter jet would jump from \$4.4 billion this year to more than \$6 billion next year, according to the proposed budget. That means the service would be able to increase purchases from 28 aircraft in 2015 to 44 in 2016.

The cap would hold F-35 purchases to 30.

End strength is also targeted for a bump after it dipped in the last two years.

The Air Force wants to increase active-duty, reserve and Guard airmen from 483,000 to 492,000 over the coming year.

Hundreds of new billets would be created for the nuclear enterprise and cybersecurity, and 2,900 billets would be restored in the U-2, F-15C fighter jet and M-9 Reaper drone programs. The E-8 and E-3 ranks would see the most increases, the service said.

Martin said it has become clear the service is undermanned and no more forced separations are being considered.

"Airmen have told us they do not have enough people to do the mission," he said. "We have listened."

Under the proposed budget, airmen would not have to worry about being forced out but they would have smaller pay raises than in past years. It calls for 1.3 percent increases, which falls below the 1.9 percent that has been the norm and the 2.3 percent average increases in civilian paychecks.

Again, defense caps would dash those plans and result in a net reduction of 1,000 billets from 2015.

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An Apache attack helicopter crew fires a Hellfire missile in September at Fort Irwin, Calif. Even though overall spending for the Army would dip from \$149 billion to \$147 billion, the service's fiscal 2016 budget request includes money to upgrade dozens of Apaches.

AARON R. BRADY
Courtesy of the U.S. Army

End strength, overall funding dip in Army's \$147B request

By MARTIN KUZ
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Army officials unveiled a proposed budget Monday that underscores the ongoing role of American troops in an array of global crises and offers a modest pay increase for active-duty troops.

Spending for the Army's baseline operations would rise from \$120.8 billion to \$126.5 billion under the requested budget. The proposal allocates \$16 billion for aircraft, tactical and combat vehicles, weapons and ammunition, compared with \$14 billion in 2015.

Overall spending for the Army would dip from \$149 billion to \$147 billion. The figure could drop further if Congress refuses to ease spending restrictions imposed on the Department of Defense and other federal agencies since 2011 through the process known as sequestration.

The wartime supplemental fund for what the military refers to as "overseas contingency operations" — a fund shielded from sequestration — would fall from \$28 billion to \$21 billion under the Army's proposed budget.

The smaller supplemental budget reflects the end of U.S. military combat operations in Afghanistan in December after more than 13 years of war.

\$16B

The amount allocated for aircraft, tactical and combat vehicles, weapons and ammunition in the Army's fiscal 2016 budget request, a \$2 billion increase from 2015.

But nine of the Army's 10 active-duty divisions remain involved to some degree in so-called "named operations," or regional engagements around the world. Some 8,000 soldiers continue to train Afghan forces, and the Army has dispatched units to the Middle East to aid the fight against the Islamic State and to Africa to halt the spread of the Ebola virus.

"The amount and velocity of instability around the world is on the rise," Maj. Gen. Thomas Horlander, the Army's budget director, said at a Monday briefing at the Pentagon.

With 140,000 soldiers stationed in 150 countries, the Army is juggling global operations as it continues to cut troop levels. The size of the active-duty force will shrink by 15,000 troops this year, to 475,000, as part of the DOD's plan to reduce the number to

450,000 by 2018.

The number of National Guard soldiers will fall by 8,200 this year, to 342,000. The Army Reserve will remain steady at 198,000.

The budget forecast calls for a 1.3 percent pay increase for active-duty troops, slightly more than the annual 1 percent raise the last two years.

The Army's request of \$5.7 billion for aircraft marks a \$473 million jump over last year, with plans to purchase 94 Black Hawk helicopters and upgrade dozens of Apache attack helicopters and Chinook cargo helicopters. Fifteen Gray Eagle drones would also be acquired.

Officials are seeking almost \$2.5 billion for tactical, combat and support vehicles. The list includes 450 joint light tactical vehicles as the military begins to replace the Humvees that were the workhorses of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. The Army and Marines have committed to purchasing 54,500 joint light tactical vehicles in the coming years.

The vehicle budget would provide for 87 upgraded Stryker armored fighting vehicles and modifications to the Army's fleets of Abrams tanks and Bradley fighting vehicles.

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2016 DEFENSE BUDGET

Pay: Hearings a sign reform of retirement system nearer

FROM FRONT PAGE

The new system would be "exactly model" the current structure of the military, Higgins said.

"It will include the tools that will draw people through the 20-year career much like the definite benefit does today," he said. "We believe it will operate very effectively and the modeling we have does support that."

Only about 17 percent of servicemembers now leave the military with any retirement benefits and the overhaul would increase that to 75 percent.

Sen. Claire McCaskill, D-Mo., said there has been a double standard, with federal civilians having access to 401(k) accounts with matched payments and servicemembers who do not.

"You might just have gotten this right. This might be just what we need to do," McCaskill said. "The fact that we would move to a match for the military makes a great deal of sense."

The panel spent nearly two years looking at the 70-year-old retirement system and Tricare health insurance as the Pentagon warns that ballooning pay and benefits costs are threatening to overtake the defense budget. Its health insurance recommendations included abolishing Tricare and providing troops an allowance to buy a variety of policies from private insurers.

The reform recommendations could eventually save about \$12 billion per year and create new benefits systems that are sustainable in the long run, the commission said.

Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, praised the panel for an "excellent comprehensive report" and said it would be used by lawmakers as a tool as they consider reform.

The Senate committee is planning a series of hearings on the panel's recommendations helmed by Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., a significant move and a strong signal that the chamber could eventually take up legislation to change the retirement system.

Sen. Kelly Ayotte, R-N.H., said the panel's "important work" gives the military a chance to lead the way in reforming expensive entitlement programs at a time when growing federal debt and spending are a looming problem.

"I think we are looking at our military stepping forward first in making many changes," she said.

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Flexibility of VA funds debated

Stakeholders have mixed reactions to White House proposed budget

By HEATH DRUZIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Veterans groups and lawmakers had mixed reactions to the White House's Veterans Affairs budget, which proposes a steep rise in the department's funding but diverts money from a program aimed at giving VA patients more flexibility to seek private care.

The president's budget would increase discretionary funds for the VA by nearly 8 percent, money aimed at hiring more doctors, increasing money for construction, and giving veterans improved health care options. It also calls for an advance appropriation of \$63.3 billion for 2017 medical care, which is a 5.5 percent increase over 2016.

Much of the budget is similar to this year's Independent Budget, an annual VA budget mock-up put together by several veterans service organizations.

"It is a very positive sign that the VA is recommending real increases in funding for medical care for both FY 2016 and for FY 2017," Al Kovach, president of Paralyzed Veterans of America, said in a released statement. "However, it is imperative that Congress work with the administration to address the shortfall in medical care funding."

The budget now gets referred to House and Senate committees and the Congressional Budget Office for review and will likely slowly wind its way through Congress into spring.

The VA has been under heavy scrutiny amid a national health care scandal that cost former Secretary Eric Shinseki his job and led to a push to overhaul the department, the second largest in the federal government.

Diane Zumatto, AmVets' national legislative director, applauded certain aspects of the budget, especially an increase in funding for construction to improve the VA health care system's aging infrastructure.

Some Obama-GOP overlap seen in budget

WASHINGTON — There are reasons President Barack Obama and his aides will argue that his new budget can be the start of a negotiation with the Republican controlled Congress. For one, some of his proposals — including defense hikes — are thematically in the same sphere as those

But she warned that fixing the VA requires much more than dollars.

"One of the big things that AmVets is concerned about is we don't necessarily feel the solutions to the problems that VA has experienced is just to throw money at it," she said.

"It's not to say the VA shouldn't be getting perhaps an increase, but we would really like to see somebody doing a very careful analysis of the resources and to see, are we doing things efficiently? Are we using the money in the right places for the right things?"

One provision that has already proved controversial is a proposal to divert money from the Veterans Choice Act, a program allowing patients in the VA system to use private hospitals. VA officials have said fewer veterans than expected have used their choice cards to seek care outside of the VA system, meaning the act is currently overfunded, though the department has not provided data to show this.

This budget action would have the effect of denying many veterans the choice to access private health care, thereby forcing them to stay in a VA health care system that has failed, for too long, to provide care in a timely manner — sometimes with deadly consequences," Concerned Veterans of America CEO Pete Hegseth said in a statement.

Other veterans groups have so far taken a more measured approach. Louis Celli, the American Legion's director of veterans affairs and rehabilitation, said his group generally supports the proposals and the increase in funding.

The timing of diverting the Veterans Choice Act money concerns him, though.

"We're very pleased with the desire to increase physicians and access," he said. "For the VA to try to reprogram [funds] now, we think is a little premature."

House Committee on Veterans'

of the GOP. For another, he can block their initiatives.

No doubt Obama's ability to veto is a power that can be just as conducive to deals as it is to gridlock. But his priorities and those of Republicans find common ground on proposals to increase defense spending, upgrade the nation's aging infrastructure and fix the corporate tax system.

From The Associated Press



DAVID THOMPSON/Courtesy of the U.S. Army

Missy Frazier, a Department of Veterans Affairs nurse, provides a health screening to a local veteran during a Military Veterans Stand Down in Reading, Pa., last year. The White House's fiscal 2016 VA budget would increase discretionary funds for the VA by nearly 8 percent, money aimed at hiring more doctors, increasing money for construction, and giving veterans improved health care options.

Affairs Committee Chairman Rep. Jeff Miller, R-Fla., blasted the plan to divert veterans choice plan money, while his counterpart on the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, Sen. Johnny Isakson, R-Ga., took a more wait-and-see approach.

"On the one hand, you could read it as taking money from veterans choice and moving it to some other parts of veterans health care, which might diminish the capability of veterans choice being able to be operational and in place or you could look at it as giving the secretary flexibility to meet the demands of the veterans without diminishing veterans choice," he said at a VA press conference Tuesday.

"If it's the latter, that's great, if it's the former, we've got big problems."

Speaking at the same press conference, VA Secretary Bob McDonald said the proposal to divert money was his idea, and that he was surprised at the outcry.

"What I was asking for in that legislation or that approach was to have flexibility," he said. "If we don't get as many veterans going outside [the VA system] and they're coming in, I don't want to be short money [for VA care]."

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MILITARY

S. Korea forms sub command

Reorganization aims to bolster combat readiness against North

By ERIC SLAVIN
AND YOO KYONG CHANG
Stars and Stripes

South Korea has become the sixth country in the world to establish an independent submarine command, a move that underscores the increasing emphasis on undersea operations around the Asia-Pacific region.

Better protecting the country from North Korean naval threats was a key factor behind the reorganization, South Korean officials said.

The new command brings operations, logistics, training and maintenance — all of which had been piecemeal responsibilities for different departments within the larger navy — under one roof, a spokesman for the service's Gyeong-yong-shi headquarters said Tuesday.

"The command was changed from a one-star rank to a two-star rank now, for taking more responsibility for undersea operations," said the spokesman, who

spoke under customary condition of anonymity.

South Korea possesses 12 diesel-electric submarines, including three advanced Song Won-I Class boats, with plans to procure more in the next few years. They also have 11 midget submarines, according to The Military Balance 2014, published by the International Institute for Security Studies think tank.

North Korea has an estimated 72 submarines, according to The Military Balance 2014. While many of those ships are considered technologically inferior to the world's most modern subs, there are signs that North Korea's fleet has undergone some upgrades.

In 2011, North Korea began introducing a larger, faster variant of its diesel-electric Shark-class submarine, according to several South Korean media reports quoting government sources.

About 20 of North Korea's total stock are midget submarines.

In 2010, an international investigation concluded that a North Korean midget submarine fired a torpedo on South Korea's destroyer ROKS Cheonan five years ago, killing 46 aboard. North Korea has denied involvement in the disaster.

Some media reports have speculated that North Korea is considering developing a ballistic missile-capable submarine, though South Korean officials have never confirmed it. Analysts believe such a vessel is several years away.

U.S. military officials have embraced South Korea's undersea efforts; in January, the U.S. conducted a bilateral exercise that included anti-submarine warfare training.

Sixty percent of the U.S. submarine fleet already is based in the Pacific, a move the surface fleet will mirror by 2020. However, as Cold War-era subs reach their retirement dates, the fast-attack submarine fleet is projected



Courtesy of South Korea Ministry of Defense

South Korean sailors salute during a ceremony establishing the country's independent submarine command on Monday.

to shrink 25 percent by 2028, even as the Navy commissions new boats annually.

To make up for fewer numbers, the U.S. may rely more on its allies to preserve regional stability, Rear Adm. Stuart Munsch, commander of Submarine Group 7, told Stars and Stripes in August.

South Korea, Japan and Vietnam have all announced plans to increase submarine procurement during the next few years. China has also vastly upgraded its submarine arsenal, which includes nuclear-powered vessels.

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Courtesy of the U.S. Air Force

Maj. Caleb Guthmann, 492nd Fighter Squadron assistant director of operations, along with airmen of the squadron and NATO allies, carry a fallen member of the French air force during a memorial service at Los Llanos Air Base, Albacete, Spain, on Thursday.

Multinational exercise in Spain called off after Greek F-16 crash

By ADAM L. MATHIS
Stars and Stripes

RAF MILDENHALL, England — A multinational training exercise in Spain was canceled after a fatal crash last week that killed 11 foreign military personnel, U.S. Air Force officials said Tuesday.

The Spanish Ministry of Defense made the decision to call off the Tactical Leadership Program exercise and flying never resumed following the Jan. 26 crash, a U.S. Air Forces in Europe official said. Two Greek pilots were killed when their F-16 crashed upon takeoff. Nine French airmen on the ground were also killed when the plane hit the parking apron.

Eight U.S. airmen from RAF

Lakenheath, England, suffered minor injuries in the crash. About 50 Lakenheath airmen returned from the training last week, a spokesman said. The spokesman for the base was not certain if the injured had returned to England, but said the injuries were not severe enough to force them to remain in Spain.

One F-15E Strike Eagle from Lakenheath suffered minor damage in the crash and is still in Spain awaiting repairs and an engine scope exam to ensure there are no foreign objects present, the base spokesman wrote in an email.

A second F-15E also stayed in Spain while airmen examine a hydraulic leak and change a tire, but those repairs were unrelated

to the crash, the spokesman said. Officials hope both jets and about 30 airmen will return to Lakenheath next week.

The exercise began Jan. 19 at Los Llanos Air Base near the city of Albacete and was scheduled to run until mid-February.

The Tactical Leadership Program is a long-running effort to improve air operations among several NATO nations. Belgium, Britain, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and the United States are currently participating in the program, which started in 1978. Spain has hosted the training since 2009.

Stars and Stripes reporter Jennifer Starn contributed to this report. mathis.adam@stripes.com

Grounded ship freed from Okinawan reef

Stars and Stripes

A Military Sealift Command ship is once again transiting the seas after the U.S. Navy on Tuesday was able to remove the vessel from a reef 6 miles off the coast of Okinawa.

The USNS Sgt. Matej Kocak was carrying 131 civilians and U.S. servicemembers when it ran aground on Jan. 22.

For the past two weeks, personnel have been trying various ways to refloat the vessel. Workers offloaded the ship's fuel on Monday, which lightened it enough for it to break free from the reef

during a high-tide cycle, the Navy said in a news release.

After the operation, the ship was able to transit under its own power to Naval Fleet Activities White Beach in Okinawa, the Navy said.

"Safely refloating the vessel required the right sea state, the right tide and the right weather conditions to lessen any risks to personnel, the ship and the environment," the news release said.

Japan and Navy officials are now assessing the potential damage to the reef.

The cause of the incident remains under investigation.

Infant of 12th CAB soldier dies of injuries

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — The infant child of an American soldier died Monday in a German hospital, days after being admitted with unspecified injuries, according to the Army.

The circumstances into the cause of the injuries and the infant's death are being investigated by German authorities and U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command agents, according to an Army press release.

The 2-month-old child of a 12th Combat Aviation Brigade soldier was admitted to an Ansbach hospital early Saturday morning, according to the statement. The child died at a hospital in Erlangen, about 13 miles north of Nuremberg, on Monday evening.

"That's all we can say right now," said Connie Summers, a spokeswoman for the Army garrison at Ansbach.

Authorities are refraining from releasing additional information to avoid tainting the investigation, Summers said.

From staff reports

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MILITARY

Carter says he would reconsider Afghan plan

By Lolita C. Baldor

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The president's nominee to be the next Pentagon chief says he would consider changing the current plans for withdrawing all U.S. troops from Afghanistan by the end of next year if security conditions worsen.

In written comments to the Senate Armed Services Committee, Ashton Carter responded "yes" when asked if he would consider recommending changes to the current pace and size of the drawdown plan to address security concerns. He also said he is aware of reports that Islamic State militants may try to expand into Afghanistan, and said he will work with coalition partners to ensure that doesn't happen.

Carter's comments were included in his answers to a committee questionnaire that was obtained by The Associated Press. They come as Afghan leaders express concerns about the U.S. troop withdrawal and worry that local warlords may not be ready to secure the country on their own.

Republican Sen. John McCain, chairman of the committee, has repeatedly questioned the wisdom of setting and announcing a hard end date to the U.S. presence in Afghanistan. And military commanders have told Congress that they would have preferred a "more ambiguous" withdrawal schedule that would not tell the enemy exactly when U.S. forces would be gone.

The committee is scheduled to hold a hearing Wednesday to consider Carter's nomination, and while he likely will face some pointed questioning during the



JACQUELYN MARTIN/AP

Ashton Carter listens on Dec. 5 as President Barack Obama announces his selection as the nominee for defense secretary.

session, he is expected to easily get confirmed. The questionnaire provided a vivid preview of some of the more challenging subjects senators will raise, pressing him on U.S. national security strategy in hot spots around the globe.

Carter largely toed the administration line in the 91-page, 328-question document, as he answered queries on Russia, China, North Korea, Yemen and the ongoing military operations in Iraq and Syria. Asked about Iraq, Carter said he would encourage efforts to arm and integrate Sunni tribal forces into the Iraqi military to help fight Islamic State militants who have taken control of large sections of the country.

He reiterated persistent com-

plaints from military and defense leaders about the potential effects of more budget cuts on the armed services. He said U.S. forces can still defeat one regional enemy, battle another and conduct various counterterrorism operations at the same time, but the risks are growing. Any additional budget cuts would require more reductions in the size of the military, he said.

Carter said competition between Islamic State militants and al-Qaida for jihadi dominance could increase the threat to the homeland and western interests "as each group increases external plotting efforts in an attempt to bolster their credentials within the global jihadist movement."

Senate clears bill aimed at reducing veterans' suicides

By Matthew Daly

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A bill aimed at reducing a suicide epidemic among military veterans won unanimous approval from the Senate on Tuesday, sending the measure to the president for his expected signature.

The bill is named for Clay Hunt, a 26-year-old veteran who killed himself in 2011, and comes in response to suicides that on average claim the lives of 22 military veterans every day.

White House spokesman Josh Earnest said President Barack Obama strongly supports the bill and will sign it.

The House passed the bill unanimously last month.

The measure would require the Pentagon and the Department of Veterans Affairs to submit to independent reviews of their suicide prevention programs and offers financial incentives to psychiatrists and other mental health professionals who agree to work for the VA. It also would help military members as they transition from active duty to veteran status.

Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., said he was proud the Senate voted "to enhance the care we provide our men and women in uniform who continue to battle the lasting wounds of war."

"Our nation has much work still to do to fulfill its responsibilities for our veterans, and this bill is an important step in improving life-saving mental health care services for the men and women who have served and sacrificed," McCain said.

John Stroud, national com-

mander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, said the bill strengthens and expands the mental health programs and services available to servicemembers and veterans.

Even so, the VFW is concerned that some servicemembers are being kicked out of the military for pre-existing mental health problems without first being properly diagnosed or treated, "meaning they could easily be denied critical VA care and benefits after they are discharged," Stroud said.

‘[T]his bill is an important step in improving life-saving mental health care services for the men and women who have served and sacrificed.’

Sen. John McCain
R-Ariz.

gress to continue to work on the issue.

Despite unanimous support in the House and Senate, the measure has faced resistance from some lawmakers. Supporters of the bill were frustrated late last year when the measure was blocked by then-Sen. Tom Coburn, R-Okla.

Coburn, who retired in January, said the bill duplicated existing programs. He also objected to the \$22 million price tag.

Japanese vaccine mandatory for all airmen

Stars and Stripes

The Japanese encephalitis vaccine is now mandatory for all airmen stationed or temporarily assigned for more than 30 days to Japan or South Korea, the Air Force said in a news release.

The vaccine requirement went into effect Sunday. Airmen currently stationed or on extended TDY in the two countries will have a year from that date to receive the two-dose vaccination

series.

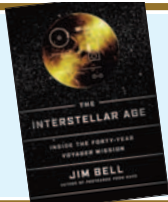
"Because of the serious consequence and nature of the disease, we think it's important to get people vaccinated," said Lt. Col. Randy Langsten, the Pacific Air Forces Surgeon General command public health officer.

The virus that causes Japanese encephalitis, or brain inflammation, is spread to humans by infected mosquitoes. Symptoms include high fever, headache, dis-

orientation, coma, tremors and convulsions, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and about a quarter of the cases are fatal. Those who survive can be left with cognitive and neurological problems, Langsten said.

The vaccine is recommended but not required for family members and Defense Department civilian employees, the Air Force said.

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WAR ON TERRORISM

Militants claim to kill Jordanian pilot

Online video purportedly released by the Islamic State group appears to show hostage being burned to death



AP

Anwar al-Tarawneh, wife of pilot Lt. Muath al-Kaseasbeh, holds a poster of him on Feb. 3.

McClatchy Foreign Staff

IRBIL, IRAQ — The Islamic State group executed Jordanian pilot Moaz al Kaseasbeh by burning him alive in a steel cage, according to a video released Tuesday on Internet forums associated with the jihadi group.

The spokesman for the Jordanian armed forces confirmed the death and vowed “punishment and revenge,” according to The Associated Press.

“The military forces announce that the hero pilot, Muath al-Kaseasbeh, has fallen as a martyr, and ask God to accept him with the martyrs,” Mamdouh al-Ameri said in a statement read on Jordanian TV.

“While the military forces mourn the martyr, they emphasize his blood will not be shed in

vain,” al-Ameri said. “Our punishment and revenge will be as huge as the loss of the Jordanians.”

His remarks came after an online video purportedly released by the Islamic State group appeared to show the captured pilot being burned to death.

If verified, the convincingly brutal video marks a new level of savagery for the group, which has never before claimed to have burned a hostage alive, and ends the monthlong saga of the first lieutenant, whose plane crashed in late December over Islamic State-controlled Raqqa, Syria, during the American-led bombing campaign against the radical group.

Jordan state television said Tuesday night that Jordanian authorities believe Kaseasbeh's death was filmed nearly a month ago and that was the reason for

the Islamic State's refusal to provide proof that Kaseasbeh was still alive during recent negotiations. That belief was consistent with tweets from rebel activists opposed to the Syrian government who posted on Jan. 8 that the pilot had been executed.

Islamist groups often behead captives who have been convicted, fairly or not, of dire crimes in an Islamic Court, and beheading is a common form of execution in Saudi Arabia, which claims the Quran as its legal code and constitution. The burning alive of a prisoner appears without religious foundation and apparently was unprecedented in Islamic State bloodletting.

The White House in a statement condemned the killing, even as it said U.S. authorities were attempting to verify the video. “We stand

in solidarity with the Government of Jordan and the Jordanian people,” the statement said.

President Barack Obama briefly addressed the killing during a forum on the Affordable Care Act at the White House. “This organization is only interested in death and destruction,” he said, referring to the Islamic State.

Kaseasbeh's execution is likely to raise tensions in Jordan, where his politically prominent family had demanded the government engage in negotiations for his release in an increasingly bizarre series of demands and counter demands that included \$200 million ransom for two Japanese hostages who've since been killed and a demand for the release of an Iraqi woman held on Jordan's death row since 2005 for a series of bombings that killed at least 57 people.

Japan left grappling with threat of terrorism

The Associated Press

TOKYO — The killing of two Japanese taken hostage by the Islamic State group has violently driven home the high stakes Japan faces and limited options it can muster in such circumstances.

It also offers a glimpse into how Japan is struggling to handle the rising menace of terrorism.

Until this crisis, Japan had not become directly embroiled in the fight against the militants, who now control about a third of both Syria and neighboring Iraq in a self-declared caliphate.

Japan is re-examining its response to the threat, both abroad and at home, mindful also of Tokyo's preparations for the 2020 Olympic Games.

Japan's options for trying to free the hostages were limited. Tokyo lacks a strong diplomatic presence in the region and has a very small corps of Arab experts — only about 30 people in this case, Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida told parliament.

It is unclear whether paying ransom would have been an option. Moreover, the military is confined by the constitution, drafted by U.S. occupying forces after World War II, to a strictly self-defense role and would be unable to stage a rescue attempt.

A video over the weekend showing the beheading of journalist Kenji Goto, purportedly from the Islamic State militants, carried chilling threats to single out Japanese anywhere as targets.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has made security a top priority of his administration. He ordered greater vigilance at airports and at Japanese facilities overseas, such as embassies and schools.



EMRAH GUREL/AP

Syrian refugees who fled violence in Kobani, Syria, play a game outside their tents at a camp in the border town of Suruc, Turkey, on Monday.

Kurdish forces seize villages near Kobani

The Associated Press

BEIRUT — Kurdish forces and their Syrian rebel allies have seized a belt of villages around Kobani from Islamic State militants, a senior official said Tuesday, days after they drove the extremists from the Syrian border town.

Islamic State militants overran large parts of Kobani and surrounding areas in mid-September,

forcing tens of thousands of Kurds to flee to neighboring Turkey.

For months Kurdish forces fought to retake Kobani, assisted by airstrikes from the U.S.-led coalition. The battle was seen as a major test of whether the airstrikes could halt the extremists' advance across Syria and neighboring Iraq.

The Islamic State group has blamed coalition airstrikes for its

defeat in Kobani.

“Most of the villages close to Kobani have been liberated,” said senior Kurdish official Anwar Muslim. “The rest will be liberated soon,” he said.

Muslim said Kurdish forces and their allies had secured a diameter of 6 to 9 miles around Kobani.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported similar information.

Kurdish officials, meanwhile, asked for international funds to rebuild Kobani.

“We liberated the city but most of it is destroyed,” Muslim said.

In an appeal sent to media outlets, Muslim and other Kurdish officials asked the United Nations to “actively take part in reconstruction of the province” and to open a “humanitarian corridor” to allow displaced Syrians to return.

NATION

Colo. Republicans flex muscles on gun control

By KRISTEN WYATT
The Associated Press

DENVER — Colorado Republicans notched their biggest victory yet Monday against gun-control measures they've fought against in vain for the last two years but the victory will likely be fleeting.

The GOP took advantage of its new Senate majority to steer through a repeal of expanded background-check requirements on private and online gun sales.

But the repeal, which cleared its first committee and appears headed toward approval by the full Senate, faces certain death in the House. That chamber remains under Democratic control.

Still, a minor victory for repealing the expanded background checks gave Republicans a chance to flex some muscle against a 2013 law they've always hated.

"This is a very dysfunctional" law, said Republican Sen. Kent Lambert, the repeal's sponsor.

The GOP committee also approved another Republican gun idea to allow anyone over 21 who can legally possess a gun to carry a concealed firearm without a permit, except on school grounds.

On the same day those two Republican bills advanced, a Demo-

cratic committee axed five other GOP gun bills. Republicans said before the session started that they hoped Democrats would reconsider the 2013 gun controls, passed in the wake of the Aurora movie theater shooting.

Democrats in the House didn't talk much during a marathon hearing that ran late into the night. They simply voted down all five proposals, including a bill almost identical to Lambert's background-check repeal. Another bill rejected by Democrats was a proposal to repeal a 15-round ammunition limit.

Even if the repeals did pass, Democratic Gov. John Hickenlooper would be likely to veto them.

The testimony ran long on Monday, but echoed the emotions that have previous gun debates in Colorado so raw. Lawmakers heard from relatives of people killed in the 2012 theater shooting, as well as other victims of mass shootings.

Jane Dougherty, whose sister was killed in the attack at Sandy Hook Elementary in Newtown, Conn., was among those who spoke in favor of the expanded background checks, saying they would help stop "the senseless slaughter of a family member."

Stricken hiker dragged to safety

By MICHAEL MELIA
The Associated Press

Daylight was slipping away and the cold was deepening on New Hampshire's Mount Washington as Monoswita Saha, 28, drifted in and out of consciousness. Her four fellow climbers began to worry that waiting for help as instructed by a 911 operator would put all of them in danger.

So they bundled Saha in a sleeping bag, tied it with ropes and dragged her, slowly and carefully, 2 miles through the snow to meet a rescue crew at the bottom of the trail.

She not only survived but was out of the hospital within a matter of hours.

"They knew if they stopped moving, they would probably die," said Lt. Wayne Saunders, of the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department.

The cause of Saha's medical emergency was unclear, but Saunders said the extreme cold and other elements were probably factors, especially considering the woman's small build.

"I'd say they were pushing it," Saunders said of their decision to hike in the forbidding conditions of the 6,289-foot mountain.

In an interview Monday, Saha said she was only mildly aware of what was happening as she was pulled down the mountain. She said the group was well prepared for the hike, and that her fainting, which she declined to discuss, was not anything they could have predicted.

"I'm really grateful that it had a

happy ending," she said.

The group of five friends from Connecticut, a mix of experienced and occasional hikers, had set out around 9 a.m. Saturday, climbing 3 miles to a peak without seeing another person. They spent only

a few minutes at the peak, where it was so cold any exposed skin was in danger.

Six hours into their trek, as they were making their descent

in the late afternoon, Saha began having trouble standing.

Her husband gave her hot tea, but even after regaining consciousness, she was not alert.

Using a cellphone, one of the friends dialed 911, and the operator advised them to stay put and keep the woman level. But the temperature on the mountain was about 5 degrees below zero, with gusty winds making it feel far colder.

The group grew impatient, asking how long it would take rescuers to arrive. Nick Potkay, 36, of Trumbull, Conn., said they began to worry not just about Saha but also about their own safety.

"If you're standing still, your toes start to freeze up," he said.

Their call was patched through to Saunders, who urged them not to wait for help.

'I'm really grateful that it had a happy ending.'

Monoswita Saha

allied New Hampshire hiker who was rescued



MIKE GROLL/AP

A pedestrian walking along Columbia Turnpike in East Greenbush, N.Y., on Monday is covered in snow.

Arctic blast whips Northeast

By PHILIP MARCELO
AND DENISE LAVOIE
The Associated Press

BOSTON — Frigid temperatures descended on the northern tier of the country, and while it's not the coldest weather of the season, the biting chill followed a powerful snowstorm from the Midwest into the Northeast.

According to the National Weather Service, people from Montana to Maine are dealing with subzero wind chill temperatures.

Temperatures plunged to as low as 25 degrees below zero in parts of upstate New York early Tuesday, a day after a storm dumped more than a foot of snow from Buffalo to the Hudson Valley. The National Weather Service said it was 25 below before dawn in Glens Falls, 45 miles north of Albany, and minus 21 degrees in Watertown, near Lake Ontario's eastern end.

The arctic blast is also bringing wind chills of minus 20 to parts of Pennsylvania and New England. The cold prompted warnings of "flash freezing" and black ice from Philadelphia to Portland, Maine.

A winter storm warning was lifted early Tuesday for Maine, where Machias was the hardest hit, with 17 inches of snow; before the sky cleared. Rockland, in



M. SPENCER GREEN/AP

Kevin Blouin, left, and Matt Blouin clear snow from their walk Monday in Blue Island, Ill.

Maine's Knox County, received 14 inches, and there were widespread reports of at least 10 inches.

Earlier, the snowstorm, which dumped more than 19 inches of snow on Chicago and more than a foot on southeastern Wisconsin,

deepened off the southern New England coast. It brought accumulations approaching 18 inches in the Boston area and around a foot of slushy wintry mix to Hartford, Conn.; Providence, R.I.; southern New Hampshire; and Vermont — places still reeling from the up to 3 feet they got last week.

Hardest hit in New Hampshire was Weare, in Hillsborough County, which got more than 15 inches of snow. New York City's snow totals ranged from about 3.6 inches in Central Park to 7 inches in the Bronx, while Long Island got 3 to 10 inches.

The Philadelphia area received about an inch of snow before the precipitation changed to rain. Forecasters said portions of Lehigh Valley got up 8 inches, and there was up to a foot in northern Pennsylvania. Much of New Jersey got several inches of snow, while parts of northern Ohio received at least a foot.

As Boston recovers from its second major winter storm in a week, Mayor Martin J. Walsh announced the victory parade for the Super Bowl champion New England Patriots would be postponed until Wednesday morning.

"We look forward to celebrating with Patriots fans during better weather on Wednesday," Walsh said in a statement.

GM to compensate families of at least 51 victims

By TOM KRISHER
The Associated Press

DETROIT — The families of 51 people who died in crashes caused by faulty ignition switches in small General Motors cars will get payments from a company fund, but others will have to wait months for decisions on thousands of new claims.

Compensation expert Kenneth Feinberg has also deemed 77 people injured in crashes as eligible for payments from the fund, which received at least 4,180 claims by a Saturday deadline,

including more than 1,100 in the past week.

But attorneys, lawmakers and at least one family member say some were forced to settle with Feinberg rather than run the risk that they would not be able to sue GM because of its 2009 bankruptcy agreement.

Camille Biros, deputy administrator of the fund who has worked with Feinberg to compensate victims of the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the BP oil spill, said the last-minute flurry of activity is common in compensation cases. She said the number of claims could

rise because those filed by mail had to be postmarked by Jan. 31.

More death and injury claims are likely to be granted, Biros said, but it could take until late spring to sort through all of the paperwork.

GM was aware of faulty ignition switches on Chevrolet Cobalts and other small cars for more than a decade but it did not recall them until 2014. On 2.6 million GM vehicles worldwide, the switches can slip out of the "on" position, causing the cars to stall, knocking out power steering and turning off the air bags.

WORLD

UN: Serbia, Croatia didn't commit genocide in '90s

THE HAGUE, Netherlands — The United Nations' top court ruled Tuesday that Serbia and Croatia did not commit genocide against each other's people during the bloody 1990s wars sparked by the breakup of the former Yugoslavia.

The ruling could help put to rest lingering animosities between the Balkan neighbors.

The International Court of Justice said Serb forces did commit widespread crimes in Croatia early in the war, but they did not amount to genocide. The 17-judge panel then ruled that a 1995 Croat offensive to win back territory from rebel Serbs also featured serious crimes, but did not reach the level of genocide.

Paris: 8 on trial for \$113M jewel heist

PARIS — Eight men charged with one of the world's biggest jewel heists went on trial Tuesday in Paris, accused of stealing more than \$113 million worth of luxury watches, necklaces, earrings and other valuables from a Harry Winston boutique in two operations.

Many of the jewels have never been found. Charges against the men included armed robbery in an organized gang, association with a criminal enterprise and receiving stolen goods.

Four men dressed as building painters entered the store near the Champs-Élysées by a service entrance in 2007, tying up staff and stealing 360 items of jewelry and 120 watches, according to judicial documents.

A year later, the store was targeted again. Four men — three wearing wigs and dressed as women — walked in the main entrance and stole 297 pieces of jewelry and 104 watches in less than 20 minutes, according to the documents.

"Look at all the TV series of jewel heists, where you have people wearing masks, flask jackets. And here, we have stockings and high heels," defense lawyer Eric Dupond-Moretti told reporters.

Prosecutors: 3 years in jail for nut rage exec

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korean prosecutors on Monday recommended three years in jail for the former Korean Air executive charged with endangering flight safety during a tantrum over how she was served macadamia nuts.

Cho Hyun-ah, the daughter of Korean Air's chairman, has pleaded not guilty to four charges. In the final day of testimony, she defended her actions as the result of devotion to work and said cabin crew in first class had erred by not following proper procedures.

Cho ordered the chief flight attendant off a Dec. 5 flight after a heated confrontation with cabin crew, forcing the plane to return to the gate at John F. Kennedy Airport in New York. She was angry at being offered nuts in a bag, instead of on a dish. Park Chang-jin, the chief attendant, told the court he and others were "treated like 'chicken slaves'" by Cho.

Her behavior, dubbed nut rage, caused an uproar in South Korea.

From The Associated Press



PETER DAVID JOSEK/AP

A Ukrainian soldier holds a weapon as people wait on a bus to leave the town of Debaltsevo in Artemivsk, Ukraine, on Tuesday. Since the unrest in eastern Ukraine surged anew in early January, the separatists have made notable strides in clawing territory away from the government in Kiev.

UN: Ukraine deaths top 5,300

Shelling of residential areas violates international humanitarian law, court says

The Associated Press

ARTEMIVSK, Ukraine — The United Nations on Tuesday sharply criticized both the Ukrainian government and the pro-Russia rebels for turning bus stops, schools, markets and hospitals into battlegrounds where civilians are getting killed.

Indiscriminate shelling and an escalation in the fighting in eastern Ukraine have killed at least 224 civilians in the past three weeks alone, the U.N. said, raising the overall death toll to 5,358 people since April.

Hostilities between Russia-backed separatists and Ukrainian troops resumed with a vengeance in January after a month of relative calm. The latest peace talks broke down Saturday, with both sides blaming the other for prolonging the fighting.

"Bus stops and public transport, marketplaces, schools and kinder-

gartens, hospitals and residential areas have become battlegrounds ... in clear breach of international humanitarian law," U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein said, adding that 545 civilians were wounded in the last three weeks as well.

He blamed the high civilian death toll on "the indiscriminate shelling of residential areas in both government-controlled territory and in areas controlled by the armed groups."

Rebels in the separatist stronghold of Donetsk said Tuesday that artillery fire killed at least eight people and wounded 22 others in the past day, while Ukrainian military spokesman Andriy Lysenko said five servicemen had been killed and 27 wounded in the same period.

The rebels' main offensive is now directed at Debaltsevo, a railway junction between the

rebel-held cities of Luhansk and Donetsk. Separatists say they are not planning to storm Debaltsevo itself because of the potential for civilian casualties.

Ukraine accuses Russia of arming the rebels, a charge that Russia denies. But Western military experts say the sheer amount of heavy weapons in rebel hands belies that denial.

President Barack Obama has so far opposed sending lethal assistance to aid Ukraine's government, but a senior administration official told The Associated Press the surge in fighting has spurred the White House to review that policy.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel reiterated Tuesday in Berlin that Germany would not deliver lethal weapons to Ukraine, saying she intends to focus on finding a "diplomatic solution" to the conflict.

UK 3-person-DNA baby bill clears hurdle

The Associated Press

LONDON — Britain's House of Commons gave preliminary approval Tuesday to permitting scientists to create babies from the DNA of three people, a technique that could protect some children from inheriting potentially fatal diseases from their mothers.

The bill still needs approval by the House of Lords — and a further Commons vote on any amendments — before becoming law. If so, it would make Britain the first nation to allow embryos to be genetically modified.

Britain has long been a leader in reproductive technology; the

world's first baby from in vitro fertilization, Louise Brown, was born in the U.K. in 1978.

The vote in the House of Commons was 382-128 in favor. No date has been set for debate in the House of Lords but it is expected to be in the next few weeks. It would be unusual for it to reject legislation that has passed overwhelmingly in the Commons.

The contentious techniques — which aim to prevent mothers from passing on inherited diseases — involve altering a human egg or embryo before transferring it into the mother. Critics fear they could lead to "designer babies."

The technology is completely

different from that used to create genetically modified foods, where scientists typically select individual genes to be transferred.

Some say the techniques cross a fundamental scientific boundary, since the changes made to the embryos will be passed on to future generations. The techniques would likely be used only in about a dozen British women every year who have faulty mitochondria, the energy-producing structures outside a cell's nucleus, according to Britain's Department of Health.

Mitochondrial defects can result in diseases including muscular dystrophy, heart, kidney and liver failure and muscle weakness.

Widow says ex-KGB spy saw Putin as corrupt

The Associated Press

LONDON — Former KGB officer Alexander Litvinenko developed a powerful animosity toward Vladimir Putin, accusing the Russian leader of fomenting war and consorting with criminal gangs, the agent's widow testified Monday.

Marina Litvinenko spoke at an inquiry into the death of the ex-intelligence officer, who fled to London in 2000. He died in November 2006 after drinking tea laced with radioactive polonium-210 at a London hotel.

On his deathbed, Alexander Litvinenko accused Putin, the Russian president, of ordering his killing.

British officials have also accused the Russian state of being involved in the killing, and British police have identified two Russian men as the prime suspects. They deny guilt and Moscow refuses to extradite them.

Marina Litvinenko told the inquiry that during the 1990s her husband grew increasingly concerned about "dirty business" in the FSB, the successor to the Soviet KGB. She said a turning point came when her husband was working for the anti-terrorism unit of the FSB during the first Chechen War. He interviewed a 17-year-old boy who told him his whole class had enlisted to fight Russia.

"For Sasha, this was shocking," she said referring to her husband by a diminutive. It was "the first time he realized something (was) wrong with the world."

She said his concerns peaked when it was suggested that he kill Boris Berezovsky, a Russian oligarch who had fallen out with the Kremlin.

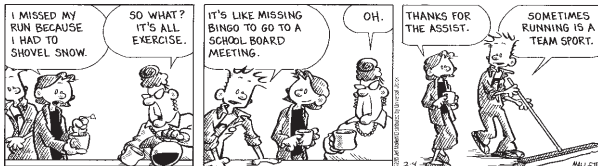
She said her husband met Putin, who was appointed director of the FSB in 1998, to complain about corruption, but came away thinking their talk "was not productive."

Alexander Litvinenko was arrested after accusing the FSB of plotting to kill Berezovsky at a 1998 news conference. He was released in late 1999 and fled Russia the following year.

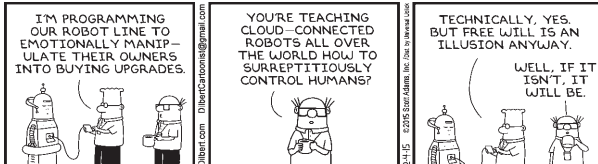
Marina Litvinenko said the family settled in Britain after the U.S. refused to grant them asylum. She said she, her husband and their son traveled to Turkey and asked for asylum at the U.S. Embassy in Ankara. When they were turned down, they bought plane tickets to Tbilisi, Georgia, via London. She said at London's Heathrow Airport, Alexander Litvinenko approached a police officer and said, "I am KGB officer and I am asking for political asylum."

Marina Litvinenko said that from 2004 her husband received monthly payments of about \$3,000 from British intelligence in return for "consulting services" about organized crime in Russia.

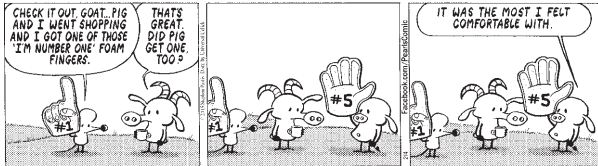
Frazz



Dilbert



Pearls Before Swine



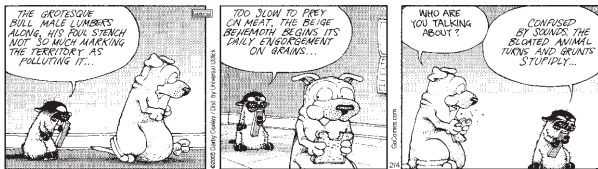
Non Sequitur



Candorville



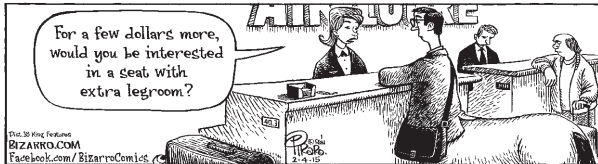
Get Fuzzy



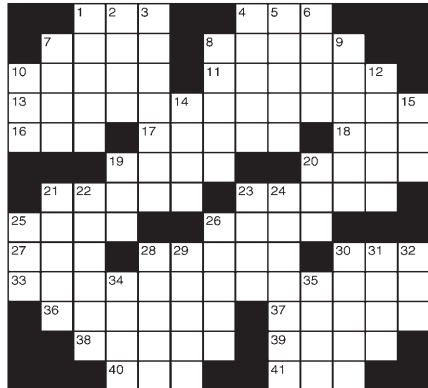
Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



ACROSS

- 1 Greek X
- 4 Viral video critter, often
- 7 Took off
- 8 Paycheck extra
- 10 Wing-shaped
- 11 Dorothy's Em, for one
- 13 Terrible twins?
- 16 Chances, for short
- 17 Parishioners, collectively
- 18 Yang counterpart
- 19 Spinal column component
- 20 Bygone carmaker
- 21 Impel
- 23 Idaho's capital
- 25 Be sickeningly sweet
- 26 Whine like a cat
- 27 Cartoonist Chast
- 28 Call at sea
- 30 Omega preceder
- 33 Versatile athletes
- 36 Consecrate with oil
- 37 Self-evident truth

38 Biological division

- 39 Festive
- 40 Golf aid
- 41 Type measures
- 1 Santa —
- 2 Flavor enhancer
- 3 Pastoral
- 4 Marilyn Milian's workplace
- 5 Bug
- 6 Ballet frill
- 7 Dud
- 8 Wax-and-dye art
- 9 Prophetesses
- 10 Fuss
- 12 Lose a syllable

14 Relaxation

- 15 Halves of 41-Across
- 19 Parch
- 20 Lubricant
- 21 Plant life
- 22 Leaking slowly
- 23 Wild party
- 24 Not mere anger
- 25 Old PC monitor
- 26 Lightbulb stat
- 28 Type of skirt
- 29 Scene of action
- 30 Buckets
- 31 Old portico
- 32 Doctrine
- 34 Versifier
- 35 Physical

Answer to Previous Puzzle



2-4

CRYPTOQUIP

QVD LGGMVO LGNRF SK
TFNGBI TGY SODGZVFZVSD
ZYBLOI VS ZVNOI GT
EGIZVHVZK: MOOQHOY GT
ZEO ROFLO.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN I BRING UP THIS TOPIC WITH THE ROLLERBLADER, HE JUST KEEPS SKATING AROUND THE SUBJECT.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: T equals F

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Tech firms hint at more fiscal restraint

By MICHAEL LIEDTKE
The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Technology's big-spending trio of Google Inc., Facebook Inc. and Amazon.com Inc. appear to be tightening their belts — at least a notch — in a concession to cost-conscious investors and a strong dollar that's taking a big bite out of their revenue.

Hints of restraint were sprinkled throughout the companies' latest quarterly reports released last week. Expenses at all three are still expected to rise faster than revenue this year, but Google, Facebook and Amazon signaled that spending increases might not be as dramatic as expected. The message boosted all of their stocks, which had been in Wall Street's penalty box for the companies' free-spending ways.

The shift can be traced to economic turmoil in Europe and Asia that has caused the dollar's value to rise against many other currencies, said BGC Financial analyst

“They all have massive opportunities ahead that they want to pursue, but they are also going out of their way to sound more prudent.”

Colin Gillis
BGC Financial

Colin Gillis. Revenue coming in from overseas will translate into fewer dollars — potentially chopping about 4 percent off of 2015 revenue compared with 2014, Gillis estimates.

“That’s a significant hit,” said Gillis. “They all have massive opportunities ahead that they want to pursue, but they are also going out of their way to sound more prudent.”

Amazon’s moderation was the most obvious. The e-commerce company’s fourth-quarter operating expenses rose at a slower pace than analysts had anticipated. That delighted investors, who have become increasingly frustrated with recurring

losses driven by CEO Jeff Bezos’ prolific spending on data centers, distribution centers, gadgets and drones. Amazon shares, which had hit a 52-week low after the company’s prior earnings report in October, spiked nearly 14 percent on the fourth-quarter results.

The change was more about tone than the actual numbers released by Facebook and Google, since spending at both companies still accelerated in the fourth quarter. Investors initially seemed spooked, but they settled down after reassuring remarks from Facebook and Google executives.

Google Chief Financial Officer

Patrick Pichette stressed that the search giant’s expenses included \$300 million in one-time accounting items and emphasized the company’s commitment to finding “a healthy balance between growth and discipline.”

Meanwhile, Facebook revised its 2015 budget. The social networking leader’s costs may increase by as much as 70 percent this year, down from a previous ceiling of 75 percent, according to Chief Financial Officer David Wehner.

MARKET WATCH

Feb. 2, 2015

Dow Jones industrials	+196.09
	17,361.04
Nasdaq composite	+41.45
	4,676.69
Standard & Poor’s 500	+25.86
	2,020.85
Russell 2000	+10.12
	1,175.51

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs (Feb. 4)	\$1.3587
Dollar buys (Feb. 4)	€0.7360
British pound (Feb. 4)	\$1.61
Japanese yen (Feb. 4)	¥77.00
South Korean won (Feb. 4)	₩1,058.00
Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3770
British pound	\$1.5103
Canada (dollar)	1.2522
China (Yuan)	6.2571
Denmark (Krone)	6.5046
Egypt (Pound)	7.6301
Euro	\$1.1444/€0.8738
Hong Kong (dollar)	7.7550
Hungary (Forint)	270.28
Israel (Shekel)	3.8996
Japan (Yen)	117.60
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.2945
Norway (Krone)	7.5649
Philippines (Peso)	44.01
Poland (Zloty)	3.65
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7535
Singapore (dollar)	1.3470
South Korea (Won)	1,096.74
Switzerland (Franc)	0.9246
Taiwan (dollar)	32.61
Turkey (Lira)	1.4054

(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., nonlocal British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	3.25
Discount rate	7.75
Federal funds market rate	0.11
3-month bill	0.01
30-year bond	7.25

WEATHER OUTLOOK



Wednesday's US temperatures

City	Hi	Lo	Wthr	City	Hi	Lo	Wthr	City	Hi	Lo	Wthr	City	Hi	Lo	Wthr
Able, Texas	67	40	Wthr	Chatanooga	54	30	PCldy	Fort Wayne	29	23	Clcy	Louisville	50	32	Clcy
Akron, Ohio	34	22	Snow	Cheyenne	26	22	Snow	Fresno	65	45	Clcy	Lubbock	66	36	Clcy
Albany, N.Y.	10	10	Snow	Chicago	24	19	Snow	Goodland	29	27	Snow	Macon	59	35	Clcy
Albuquerque	61	33	Clcy	Cincinnati	43	29	Clcy	Grand Junction	53	32	Clcy	Madison	59	35	Clcy
Allentown, Pa.	36	17	Clcy	Cleveland	24	23	Snow	Great Falls	37	9	PCldy	Medford	59	43	Clcy
Amarillo	58	35	PCldy	Colorado Springs	39	33	Clcy	Hartford	39	19	PCldy	Milwaukee	57	36	PCldy
Anchorage	14	5	Clcy	Columbia, S.C.	57	38	Clcy	Honolulu	80	68	Rain	Miami Beach	75	63	Clcy
Asheville	52	26	PCldy	Columbus, Ga.	57	38	Clcy	Houston	62	41	Clcy	Midland-Odessa	72	36	PCldy
Atlanta	55	34	PCldy	Columbia, S.C.	57	38	Clcy	Jacksonville	52	31	PCldy	Minneapolis	21	14	Clcy
Atlantic City	46	19	Clcy	Concord, N.H.	28	3	Snow	Key West	76	67	Clcy	Missoula	35	22	Clcy
Austin	59	42	Clcy	Corpus Christi	64	45	Clcy	Los Angeles	74	51	PCldy	Mpls-St Paul	16	9	Clcy
Baltimore	45	25	Clcy	Dallas-Ft Worth	59	42	Clcy	Los Angeles	74	51	PCldy	Mobile	61	37	Clcy
Baton Rouge	62	41	Rain	Dayton	37	27	Clcy	Morón	55/30			Montgomery	57	31	Clcy
Bilings	32	9	Clcy	Daytona Beach	69	49	Clcy	Rota	54/40			Nashville	54	31	PCldy
Birmingham	56	31	Clcy	Denver	32	28	Clcy	St. Louis	52	31	PCldy	New Orleans	57	46	Rain
Bismarck	11	3	Clcy	Des Moines	22	12	Snow	St. Louis	52	31	PCldy	Peterburg	57	46	Rain
Boston	48	35	Clcy	Detroit	31	22	Clcy	Jacksonville	52	31	PCldy	St. Thomas	84	74	Clcy
Boulder	62	32	Clcy	El Paso	68	41	Clcy	Jacksonville	52	31	PCldy	Salt Lake City	56	40	Rain
Bridgport	37	15	Clcy	Elkins	42	25	PCldy	Key West	76	67	Clcy	San Antonio	71	40	Clcy
Brownsville	64	42	Clcy	Erie	30	22	Snow	Knoxville	53	28	PCldy	San Diego	67	53	PCldy
Buffalo	28	19	Snow	Eugene	56	43	Clcy	Lake Charles	62	40	Clcy	San Francisco	60	50	Snow
Burlington, Vt.	26	9	Snow	Evansville	46	31	Clcy	Lansing	25	19	Clcy	San Jose	56	46	PCldy
Caribou, Maine	17	-8	Snow	Fairbanks	11	-23	Clcy	Las Vegas	72	49	Clcy	Santa Fe	56	28	PCldy
Charleston, S.C.	61	33	PCldy	Fargo	10	-1	Snow	Lexington	48	30	PCldy	St. Marie	51	4	Snow
Charleston, W.Va.	50	27	PCldy	Flagstaff	59	26	Clcy	Lincoln	21	15	Snow	Savannah	59	36	Clcy
Charlotte, N.C.	54	30	Clcy	Flint	29	21	Clcy	Little Rock	55	34	Clcy	Seattle	51	41	Clcy
				Fort Smith	55	31	Clcy	Los Angeles	74	51	PCldy	Shreveport	55	37	Clcy

The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

National temperature extremes
Hi: Mon., 86, Pompano Beach, Fla.
Lo: Mon., -31, Embarras and Cotton, Minn.

WIRED WORLD

Neuroscience's Nintendo?

Data suggest that negative impacts of video gaming may be vastly overstated

By JOHN KEILMAN
Chicago Tribune

CHICAGO

Imagine a hardcore video game fanatic, and the picture you summon probably won't resemble Roman Rivera.

He grew up captivated by games from "Pokemon" to "Call of Duty," and evaded his mom's screen time limits by covertly playing his Game Boy after lights out. Now that he's 21, he spends up to four hours a day battling enemies in the virtual arena of "Dota 2."

Yet he was an honor student and a member of the debate team at suburban Downers Grove North High School, and today he's studying economics at the University of Chicago. These accomplishments didn't come in spite of gaming, Rivera said, in a way, gaming helped to make them possible.

"You pick up skills from whatever you do, and you can decide to aim those skills in an intellectual direction," he said, crediting video games with broadening his interests and improving his mental dexterity. "They definitely enhanced the abilities I needed in life that weren't always directly present. Without a doubt they have benefited me."

Rivera's belief echoes a new wave of research that has found surprising advantages in an activity that many dismiss as a waste of time, if not an outright menace. Social scientists have recently linked gaming with enhanced mental skills, moral sensitivity and even physical fitness, creating a new image of this ubiquitous but controversial pastime.

"We're working really hard on understanding what aspects of gaming could be leveraged for the betterment of society," said Daphne Bavelier, a cognitive neuroscientist who researches video games at the University of Geneva in Switzerland and the University of Rochester in New York. "Everyone understands it's here to stay. It's not going to disappear. You could try to ban it, but it seems to have really interesting positive effects."

Researchers have done thousands of studies on gaming since the 1980s, often with unmistakably negative results. Some associated video games with an increased risk of epileptic seizures, while others cautioned that the games could provoke dangerously elevated heart rates. Many studies also linked violent games to aggression and anti-social behavior.

Such findings contributed to the anxiety surrounding video games, said Christopher Ferguson, a psychology professor at Florida's Stetson University. He cited the outcry over violent games that came when Newtown, Conn., gunman Adam Lanza was portrayed as a shooting-game obsessive (investigators ultimately found his primary gaming fixation was "Dance Dance Revolution"). Ferguson said early research into any new technology is often flawed. Studies that aim to find negative effects get funded and promoted, while those with more benign findings are unpublished and forgotten, he said.

When a new generation of scholars more familiar with the technology comes along, different results often appear — and that's what is happening with gaming, he said. "We're just not seeing the kind of data emerge that would support the technopanic that was common in earlier years," he said.

Ferguson has done dozens of studies on the subject and has consistently found that violent video games do not contribute to societal aggression. One recent project actually concluded that some children who play violent games are less likely than others to act like bullies.

"My speculation is that maybe kids turn to video games cathartically ... or it could just be that they're busy, so they don't have time to bully other kids," he said.

Gaming has long been identified as a factor in worsening child obesity, but research that scholar Chennan Liu performed at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign suggests the pastime might have gotten a bad rap. Youth survey data she examined found that those who play video games for an average of three to six hours a day were healthier than those who played less.

Liu, now a professor of social work at Renmin University of China, said the unexpected result calls for further study. But she guessed that gaming might burn more calories than watching TV, or that kids gripping a controller are less inclined to pick up a snack or a soda.

The most intriguing studies might be coming from neuroscientists, who are using MRIs and other high-tech devices to learn how gaming affects the brain. Simone Kuhn, a researcher at the Max Planck Institute for Human Development in Berlin, has found that the prefrontal cortex actually grows thicker and gray matter more voluminous in people who play games as humble as "Super Mario 64," changes that could improve memory and navigational ability.

Bavelier has focused on cognitive performance, finding that first-person shooters — one of the most reviled categories of video games — can help improve a person's vision and ability to pay attention.

How that might translate into real-world benefits is still unclear, but Bavelier noted that young gamers have been shown to make superior laparoscopic surgeons, performing faster and making fewer errors than more experienced peers.



A window inside Asperger's

Noah Bakshis, 15, plays a computer video game in his room in Plainfield, Ill. Doug Bakshis was dubious of the value of video games when his son Noah began to shut himself in his room to play the likes of "Minecraft" and "Fallout: New Vegas" for hours at a time. But then Noah, who has Asperger's syndrome, started to show a more open personality.

"The games have had a very calming effect on him," Bakshis said. "In the gaming world, he's in control of the environment, where he's not in the real world. He's gotten much more focused, and when things have happened in the real world, he's been more able to deal with it."

Noah, now a 15-year-old freshman at Downers Grove North High School, said gaming has expanded his interests, prompting him to study archery and Japanese culture after first encountering the topics virtually. His attention, focus and coordination have also improved, he said, as has his self-awareness. "(Games) helped me discover what my inner ethics are, what choices I would make in particular situations," he said. "What I've found is I generally try to resolve things peacefully. ... You can grow emotional attachment to the characters, and that's not a bad thing. It proves they can give humanization to a bunch of polygons."

— John Keilman, Chicago Tribune
Photo by John J. Kim, Chicago Tribune/TNS

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Jailed man had \$20K of heroin in body cavity

ME LEBANON — Police said a Sanford man who hid about \$20,000 worth of heroin in a body cavity was arrested after a weekend traffic stop in Lebanon.

The Maine Drug Enforcement Agency said Timothy Duval, 41, was a passenger in a vehicle that was pulled over at about 10 p.m. Saturday.

The vehicle was stopped after agents learned that Duval was returning to Maine with heroin bought in Massachusetts. Duval also was wanted on an outstanding federal arrest warrant for a probation violation.

During a search at the Cumberland County Jail, Duval was found to be in possession of 60 grams of heroin and 3.5 grams of cocaine. He was ordered held without bail pending a March 24 court appearance on trafficking and possession charges.

Boy reported missing playing hide-and-seek

PA DUNCANSVILLE — Police said a 10-year-old Pennsylvania boy wasn't missing as his mother feared but was found hiding under his down bed, apparently while playing hide-and-seek.

Blair Township police told The (Altoona) Mirror that the boy's mother called for help Friday night when she couldn't find the boy for an extended time.

Police in the township about 90 miles east of Pittsburgh began summoning a search-and-rescue team early Saturday when they learned the boy had been found — by a sibling, hiding under his own bed.

Officer Benjamin Shanholtz told the newspaper that the boy was found by another sibling, not the brother he had been playing with when he was last seen.

Nobody is in any legal trouble as a result of the search.

More than 4K take part in fishing tournament

ND DEVILS LAKE — More than 4,000 people took part in a weekend ice fishing tournament on Devils Lake.

WDAZ-TV reported that the event raised about \$150,000 for the city's volunteer fire department, which hosts the annual event. The tournament has been held for 31 years.

More than 100 volunteers drilled about 5,000 holes in the ice Saturday morning for the anglers who come from around the region to compete.

Kolby Metzger, of Hazen, won top prize for perch; Randy Reiter, of Surrey, caught the biggest northern; and Travis Crissler, of Belcourt, landed the biggest walleye. All three men took home \$2,000.

City removing derelict boats from mile of river

SC CHARLESTON — The city of Charleston is spending more than \$130,000 to



ANA VENEZAS, THE ORANGE COUNTY (CALIF.) REGISTER/AP

Lunar New Year's dance of the lion

A lion dance opens up the Bowers Museum's Asian Lunar New Year Free Family Festival in Santa Ana, Calif., on Sunday. Dance troupe JC Culture Foundation, of Cerritos, has provided the lion dance at the festival for years. The foundation is a nonprofit organization that performs, promotes and teaches traditional Chinese dance and culture in Los Angeles.

remove abandoned and sunken boats from the Ashley River.

The Post and Courier of Charleston reported that during the coming weeks, the city will remove 10 of about 15 boats abandoned in a 1-mile reach of river just upstream from Charleston Harbor.

The derelict boats range in size from 23 to 40 feet long.

The money comes from a \$104,000 state grant as well as local matching funds.

It's the first time in five years the city has received money from the Department of Health and Environmental Control to remove

abandoned boats.

Boy on snowmobile falls through ice, is rescued

WI MINOCQUA — Authorities rescued a boy who fell through the ice in Minocqua.

Police said the boy was riding a snowmobile on a channel near Lake Minocqua when he went through the ice Sunday afternoon.

WJFW-TV said the boy was taken to a local hospital. There's no word on his condition.

Large portion of road collapses into river

FL JACKSONVILLE — Residents of a Jacksonville townhome complex may be without electricity for two weeks after a large section of South Liberty Street collapsed into the St. Johns River.

No injuries were reported when the street buckled on Sunday, leaving a hole the size of two doublewide mobile homes. The Florida Times-Union reported that an electrical transformer

THE CENSUS

\$780K

The record amount raised by the Leves Polar Bear Plunge on Sunday at Rehoboth Beach, Del. The funds will benefit Special Olympics Delaware. More than 3,300 people took a dip in the icy Atlantic Ocean. The News Journal reported that the water was 37 degrees, 4 degrees colder than the air temperature. In 24 years, the plunge has raised \$8.3 million for children and adults with intellectual disabilities.



and conduit were damaged, cutting electricity to the Berkman Villas Townhomes.

A spokesman for Jacksonville Mayor Alvin Brown said the city is monitoring the site and will work with the Florida Department of Transportation, which oversees bridges. David DeCamp said it is too early to estimate how much repairs will cost.

Officials said they don't yet know what caused the collapse.

Helicopter crashes on frozen river; no injuries

NY CARTHAGE — Police said a helicopter pilot and his passenger were able to walk away from a crash on a frozen northern New York river.

The Jefferson County Sheriff's Office told the Watertown Daily Times the two-seat helicopter crash-landed Sunday afternoon on a frozen section of the Black River, east of Watertown.

Pilot Gary Johnson, of Carthage, and passenger Michael Rohr were able to climb from the wreckage and walk across the ice to a nearby road.

The cause of the accident was under investigation.

Man returns family dog stolen during burglary

ME PARIS — A Norway man returned a family dog after the family's pet dog during a burglary at a Hebron home has pleaded guilty.

The Sun Journal reported that Timothy Scott Robbins will be sentenced at a future date after pleading guilty last week in Oxford County Superior Court to charges of felony burglary and theft in connection with the burglary last March. Under a deal with prosecutors, he faces no more than a year behind bars.

Authorities said Robbins, 28, and Diane Downs, 42, broke into the home and stole two laptops, two iPads, three digital cameras, an Xbox video game console with 35 to 40 games, jewelry and the occupants' 2-year-old golden retriever. The dog was returned unharmed.

From wire reports

FACES



JOHN SHEARER, INVISION/AP

Common won a Golden Globe and is nominated for the best original song Academy Award for "Glory," a collaboration with John Legend from the film "Selma."

Despite Oscar nod, Common 'grateful' for Grammy love

BY MESFIN FEKADU
The Associated Press

Common says despite winning a Golden Globe and earning an Oscar nomination, he's looking forward to the Grammy Awards.

The rap star is nominated for two honors Feb. 8, including best rap album for his 10th effort, "Nobody's Smiling."

"I am very grateful to get Grammy nominations," he said in a recent interview. "It's incredible for me. But that album is important."

Common will perform his song "Glory," from the film "Selma," with John Legend at the Grammys. The song is nominated for best original song at the Feb. 22 Academy Awards. He also appeared in the film.

He says the release of "Selma"

comes at a perfect time, adding that he's thrilled to see rappers take a stance against injustice in the wake of the death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Mo.

"Not just through songs, but you see artists starting to be more active in general. You hear about artists contributing finances or showing up ... artists are showing they care," he said. "And it's important because we have this platform. I applaud that. I am happy the hip-hop culture has been about that."

Common also is nominated for best rap/sung collaboration for "Blak Majik" with R&B singer Jhene Aiko. He is already the owner of two Grammy Awards: best rap performance by a duo or group for "Southside" with Kanye West and best R&B song for "Love of My Life (An Ode to Hip Hop)" with Erykah Badu.

Former rap mogul Knight pleads not guilty to murder

BY ANTHONY MCCARTNEY
The Associated Press

Death Row Records founder Marion "Suge" Knight pleaded not guilty on Tuesday to murder, attempted murder and other charges filed after he struck two men with his truck last week.

The former rap music mogul, who appeared at Los Angeles County Superior Court for his arraignment Tuesday, is accused of intentionally running down two men, including a friend, in Compton, Calif., on Jan. 29 after an argument.

Knight remains in custody. However, his attorney James Blatt has said the collision was an accident that occurred as Knight was trying to flee an altercation in which he was assaulted.

Knight, 49, could face life in prison if convicted.

On Monday, prosecutors



PAUL BUCK, POOL/AP

Marion "Suge" Knight appears in court during his arraignment Tuesday in Los Angeles. Knight pleaded not guilty to murder, attempted murder and other charges filed after he struck two men with his truck.

charged Knight with killing Terry Carter, 55, and attempting to kill Cle "Bone" Sloan, 51. Knight also faces two charges of hit-and-run.

In addition, Knight's \$2 million

bond was revoked after a court commissioner agreed with authorities that he was a potential flight risk and could intimidate witnesses.

The ruling came after homicide detectives told the bail commissioner that Knight could face a lengthy prison sentence because of a violent criminal past, said Los Angeles County sheriff's spokeswoman Nicole Nishida. Knight was out on bail in a robbery case when the men were hit.

Knight was at the center of one of the most notorious rap conflicts of the 1990s, pitting Tupac Shakur against Biggie Smalls in an East Coast-West Coast rivalry. Knight was sent to prison for nearly five years for badly beating a rival with Shakur at a Las Vegas hotel, just hours before Shakur was fatally shot while riding in Knight's car just east of the Strip in 1996.

Winfrey, 'Selma' director team up

The Associated Press

Oprah Winfrey and the director of the Oscar-nominated movie "Selma" are creating a drama series for Winfrey's TV channel.

The project from Winfrey and Ava DuVernay is inspired by the Natalie Bazile novel "Queen Sugar," the OWN channel said Monday.

Winfrey will serve as executive producer and will play a recurring role — the first time she's acted in a series for OWN, the network said. DuVernay will write, direct and executive-produce the drama, her first TV series.

Winfrey, whose film roles include "Lee Daniels' The Butler," appears in DuVernay's film about the 1965 voting rights campaign led by the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. "Selma" is a best-picture Academy Award nominee.

Williams' wife, children fighting over estate

Robin Williams' children and wife have gone to court in a fight over the late comedian's estate.

In papers filed in December in San Francisco Superior Court, Williams' wife, Susan, says some of the late actor's personal items were taken without her permission and asks the court to exclude the contents of the Tiburon, Calif., home that she shared with Williams from the jewelry, memorabilia and other items Williams said the children should have.

Williams died at his home in August. The coroner ruled his death a suicide that resulted from asphyxia caused by hanging.

The children, Zachary, Zelda and Cody, counter that Susan Williams is "adding insult to a terrible injury" by trying to change the trust agreement and rob them

of the late actor's clothing and other personal items.

Lohans sue Fox News for defamation

Actress Lindsay Lohan and her mother, Dina Lohan, have filed a lawsuit accusing Fox News Network, TV host Sean Hannity and guest commentator Michelle Fields of defamation for claiming the actress and her mother did cocaine together.

According to court papers filed Monday, the claim was made during a discussion of celebrity overdoses on Hannity's show on Feb. 4, 2014, two days after actor Philip Seymour Hoffman died of a heroin overdose.

Court papers say Fields stated as a "matter of fact" that Lindsay's mother was doing cocaine with her daughter. Lohan's lawyers say Fox posted the segment on its website.

The suit says the Lohans are demanding that the segment be taken off Hannity's website. They're also seeking unspecified damages.

A message seeking comment from Fox wasn't immediately returned.

Other news

■ Bobbi Kristina Brown is fighting for her life, according to a statement from the Houston family Monday. Police said the 21-year-old daughter of Whitney Houston and R&B singer Bobby Brown was taken to a hospital on Jan. 31 after she was found face down and unresponsive in a bathtub in a suburban Atlanta townhome. Whitney Houston was found dead in a hotel bathtub in 2012.

■ A 26-year-old woman with the nickname Star who says she is going to marry 80-year-old mass murderer Charles Manson will have to wait a while longer.

Afton Elaine Burton and Manson got a marriage license last year to stage a wedding inside a visiting room at California State Prison, Corcoran. However, it expires Thursday, meaning they missed their chance to tie the knot over the weekend, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation spokesman Jeffrey Callison said Monday.



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WORLD

Macau casino operator opens facility in Manila

The Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines — Melco Crown Entertainment formally opened its \$1 billion casino and entertainment resort in Manila on Monday, hoping to cash in on a fast-growing Philippine economy and increased tourism.

The company's co-chairman and CEO, Lawrence Ho, said the opening of the City of Dreams Manila is part of the company's plans to have casinos across Asia.

It operates casinos in the world's biggest gambling market,

Macau. China's corruption crackdown has deterred high-rolling mainland gamblers from Macau's casino tables in the past year.

The Manila casino will cater to the growing influx of tourists to the Philippines, but Clarence Chung Yuk Man, chairman of the Philippine arm of Melco Crown, said it would also target local gamblers who are estimated to have parted with \$2.3 billion last year.

He said out of the casino operators with licenses in the Philippines, Melco is the only one with a customer base in Macau and that

can bring in VIP customers and high-rollers.

"We will promote cross-marketing and also try to promote this property to our customers so that there is additional choice for them," Chung told a news conference.

Australian billionaire James Packer, who is Melco's co-chairman, said the Philippines' strong economy, its 100 million people and rising tourism offer a huge market potential.

The resort houses a casino; the Crown, Nobu and Hyatt hotels; two premium nightclubs;



BULLIT MARQUEZ/AP

Guests enjoy swimming in a pool Monday at the newly opened City of Dreams Manila casino at the reclaimed prime property in Manila, Philippines.

the world's first DreamWorks-inspired interactive play space DreamPlay, restaurants and retail shops.

Nobu is part-owned by Hol-

lywood star Robert de Niro, who appears in a video commercial for the resort alongside Leonardo Di Caprio and director Martin Scorsese.

4 surviving Magna Cartas brought together for first time



ALASTAIR GRANT/AP

Four of the original Magna Carta manuscripts brought together by the British Library are displayed Monday in London.

By GREGORY KATZ
The Associated Press

LONDON — You can't exactly call it a reunion — the four surviving Magna Cartas had never before been in the same place.

So the British Library called it a "unification event" Monday when the priceless documents were put on display together for the first time.

The event marks the 800th anniversary of the Magna Carta, which established the timeless principle that no individual, even a monarch, is above the law.

In 1215, 40 rebellious barons came together to declare their rights to King John, and he reluctantly consented to their demands in an attempt to avoid civil war. It

‘Many people regard it as the foundation of the rule of law. It established key principles which have resonated worldwide.’

Julian Harrison

Curator of medieval manuscripts at the British Library

included acknowledgements that taxes cannot be arbitrary, that free men cannot be imprisoned without first being judged by their peers or the law and that justice cannot be denied or delayed.

But within weeks, the pope voided the agreement, and England was thrown into war.

The original Magna Carta

manuscripts were written and sealed in late June and early July 1215, and were sent individually throughout the country, making Monday's unification unique.

"It's a real moment in history," said Julian Harrison, the library's curator of medieval manuscripts. "Magna Carta has significance not just in England but world-

wide. Many people regard it as the foundation of the rule of law. It established key principles which have resonated worldwide."

The Magna Carta influenced not only Thomas Jefferson when he helped draft the Declaration of Independence, but also the writers of the French constitution and the late South African leader Nelson Mandela, who cited it in his famous speech in his own defense at the Rivonia trial in 1964, Harrison said.

Officials said the three-day unification will give some lucky members of the public as well as constitutional scholars and medieval manuscript experts a chance to scrutinize and compare the documents.



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Stars and Stripes (USPS 0471900) is published weekdays (except Dec. 25 and Jan. 1) for 50 cents Monday through Thursday and for \$1 on Friday by Pacific Stars and Stripes, Unit 45002, APO AF 96338-5002. Periodicals postage paid at San Francisco, California. Second-class postage paid at Pacific Stars and Stripes, Unit 45002, APO AF 96338-5002.

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OPINION

Let lower gas prices benefit consumers

By TIM PHILLIPS

Falling gasoline prices — are they good or bad?

Ask any American consumer and the answer will be a resounding “good.” Gas prices have dropped by more than a dollar in the last three months. This translates into a de facto tax cut of at least \$125 billion, equivalent to 2.4 million middle-class family incomes. For the average family, the savings this year could be \$750 or more. The middle class hasn't seen comparable economic relief in years.

Apparently some politicians in Washington think that's bad. They have concocted a scheme to undo that tax cut by slapping higher taxes on gasoline.

The list of tax-happy politicians is growing longer by the day. In Congress, both Democrats and usually anti-tax Republicans have lined up in support of a higher gas tax, arguing that it could fund any number of big-ticket items on Congress' to-do list. They've been joined by prominent pundits on both sides of the aisle. Their proposals vary, with some ranging from 10 or 20 cents to a dollar or more per gallon.

Yet no gas tax increase, big or small, should be on the table. There are many reasons this is a terrible idea for the consumer.

First, higher gas prices mean higher prices on goods. Groceries, clothes, electronics, manufactured goods are all main-

ly transported to your local store via truck. So when gas prices go up, so does the cost of transporting those goods. This invariably leads to higher prices, not just at the pump but at every stop on your daily or weekly errand runs.

It isn't just consumers who think that lower gas prices are good. Economists agree as well. Lower gas prices mean more economic growth. When you and I have more money to spend — which we do right now, thanks to falling gas prices — we usually spend it. That's why economists now predict that lower gas prices could add as much as half a percentage point of growth to the economy this year. A gas tax would only stymie or prevent those gains.

Moreover, such growth would create jobs and opportunities in the years to come, the keys to a strong and lasting economic recovery. No wonder the chief executive of Caterpillar has said that falling gas prices are creating “the kind of stimulus package that the Federal Reserve or Congress could never do.”

Lower gas prices help the middle class and the poor most of all. The middle class spends more on gasoline than any other income group. Households with less than \$50,000 in income spend, on average, a fifth of their wages on energy. Some economists estimate that the average family is saving \$100 a month on gas.

Those savings are even more noteworthy when you consider that family income is still lower than it was six years ago. Now, thanks to falling gas prices, the middle class and the poor finally have more money in their pockets.

Why would Congress jeopardize these gains with a higher gas tax? The most frequently repeated reason is that it would restore fiscal solvency to the Highway Trust Fund, which has been steadily losing money for years. But a higher tax isn't the solution to this problem. Instead, Congress should direct the trust fund's money to be spent solely on highways, rather than on the plethora of nonhighway projects that it currently funds. If Congress made this simple change, the fund's financial problems would be all but fixed overnight; it would be 98 percent solvent.

Surely our politicians should reorder their own spending priorities before slapping higher taxes on the rest of us. They've spent the last six years over-regulating and over-taxing the economy, thereby preventing the recovery that the American people were promised but largely haven't seen. Now that falling gas prices are contributing to real growth, politicians in Washington should take their foot off the gas tax pedal.

Tim Phillips is the president of Americans for Prosperity. This column first appeared in the Los Angeles Times.

No sympathy for ticket brokers who sold short

By STEPHEN CARTER

Bloomberg News

As an interesting coda to the most thrilling Super Bowl in recent years, I'd like to point to an unintentionally hilarious article at ESPN.com about the travails of ticket brokers who were unable to fulfill customer orders for the event. Evidently it has become common for brokers to engage in short selling, charging their clients heavy markups for tickets the brokers don't own but hope to pick up later for less than the contract price. This year, prices never fell, and the brokers couldn't fulfill the orders.

Now, you might respond that this is always the risk in short selling. The market moves against you, you can't cover your position, you take a bath. That's the exactly right. The puzzle is why we should somehow have sympathy for the brokers who beat the wrong way. According to the story, Arizona Attorney General Mark Brnovich “suggests that it's possible for the league to help alleviate market manipulation in the future by holding back tickets and releasing them closer to the game, just like some high-profile entertainers have been known to do.”

To which one wants to reply: Huh? What market manipulation? The brokers didn't manipulate the market; they just guessed wrong. They were punished for it, offering their clients refunds of twice or more what was paid for the undelivered tickets. Probably most took hits to their reputations as well. This all is as it should be. It's unclear who exactly has to be protected from what.

Moreover, the proposed solution — holding back some tickets for release closer to the event — doesn't make any sense. Consider the issue from the point of view of the National Football League. The only reason the brokers exist is that the NFL has intentionally created a secondary market by selling Super Bowl tickets below the market-clearing level. Put otherwise, if a fan is



CHARLIE RIEDEL/AP

Yav Shapira and Lisa Redpenning, both from Boston, display their Super Bowl XLIX tickets, which they bought at the NFL ticket exchange Saturday in Phoenix. The couple spent \$5,800 for their two tickets with a face value of \$950 each.

willing to pay, say, \$2,000 for a ticket with a face value of \$1,000, the league could simply price the ticket at \$2,000 and cut out the middleman. Why doesn't this happen?

There are many reasons a for-profit business might choose to price its goods below market-clearing levels. One stands out in this case: the positive value of buzz. Think about Beanie Babies. The stuffed animals were intentionally priced below the market-clearing level because the manufacturer wanted the secondary market to exist. The trading in Beanie Babies,

along with the limited quantity of each model, helped maintain excitement about the product itself.

Now consider professional football. Every year at Super Bowl time, the networks run stories about how much tickets are going for. This helps the NFL in its effort to present the game as an exciting event everyone should care about. The league makes most of its money from advertising, not ticket sales. Ad dollars rise with viewership. The league has plainly made the calculation — I suspect a correct one — that the buzz about how much people are willing to pay for tickets in the secondary market is far more valuable than the returns that would come from charging more in the first place.

For the NFL to hold back a large block of tickets for later release would be inconsistent with this plan. It's true that the ticket brokers who lost out are participants in the secondary market that the league itself has created. But that doesn't mean they should be rewarded for betting the wrong way. The market wasn't manipulated. The market worked, and worked well. The public anticipated a great Super Bowl, and tickets were quickly bid up to the market-clearing level. The short sellers got caught holding orders they couldn't fill. That happens to short sellers all the time. If short sellers never lost money, everybody would do it. And if this particular tale of short selling didn't happen to involve football, nobody would care.

The ESPN.com article strongly implies that the people who bought from the brokers and never got tickets were victims. If so, they were victims of the brokers, not of the league. Regular readers will know that I hold no brief for the NFL. Quite the contrary. But this is the rare professional football controversy against which we can confidently conclude that the NFL is genuinely blameless.

Stephen L. Carter is a Bloomberg View columnist and a law professor at Yale.

OPINION

Obama foreign policy dividing Democrats

BY JACKSON DIEHL
The Washington Post

For more than two years, a breach has been opening between President Barack Obama and the foreign policy establishment of the Democratic Party. Last week, as Russia pressed a new offensive in Ukraine and the Senate debated sanctions on Iran, it cracked open a little wider.

First came the introduction in the Senate, and lopsided passage by the Banking Committee, of a bill that would place new sanctions on Iran if no agreement limits its nuclear program by June. Though fiercely opposed by Obama, the measure, co-sponsored by New Jersey Sen. Robert Menendez, the senior Democrat on the Foreign Relations Committee, had won the express support of 13 other Democratic senators by the end of the week. A letter signed by Menendez plus nine of them pledged to delay a final floor vote until March 24, the deadline set by the administration for finalizing the framework of a bargain.

While that postponement avoided an immediate confrontation with Obama, the larger message of the senators was clear: They are "deeply skeptical," said the letter, that Obama will obtain adequate concessions from Tehran — despite what has been an increasingly single-minded diplomatic push.

At week's end came another de facto vote of no confidence: a report of eight foreign policy luminaries, released Monday, saying the president should "immediately change" his policy of refusing to supply Ukraine with weapons to defend its besieged eastern provinces. "Washington," it said bluntly, has "not devoted sufficient attention to the growing Russian threat" and its implications for Western security. This must change."



SUSAN WALSH/AP

New Jersey Sen. Robert Menendez, the senior Democrat on the Foreign Relations Committee, is co-sponsor of a bill that does not hew to President Barack Obama's policy on Iran's nuclear ambitions.

This rebuke was signed by Michele Flournoy, the deputy defense secretary in Obama's first term; Ivo Daalder, his first-term NATO ambassador; and Strobe Talbott, a former deputy secretary of state who is president of the deep-blue Brookings Institution. It expanded on legislation calling for arms sales to Ukraine that passed Congress last month with sponsors that included Menendez and seven other Senate Democrats, including Carl Levin, of Michigan, the ranking member of the Armed Services Committee, and Richard Durbin, of Illinois, the second-ranking Senate Democrat.

The Democratic rebellion against Obama's policies began with Syria and Obama's refusal to provide support to rebels battling the regime of Bashar Assad. Obama's rejection in 2012 of a proposal by then-Secretary of State Hillary Rodham

Clinton and then-CIA Director David Petraeus to train and arm the rebels alienated a wide swath of the Democratic foreign policy mainstream — including Levin, who has campaigned for creating a no-fly zone in northern Syria, and Rep. Adam Smith, of Washington, the ranking Democrat on the House Armed Services Committee. Smith called for a formal Pentagon training program for Syrian rebels a year before Obama finally agreed to it.

The dissension now encompasses Ukraine, where Obama is seen as having been too slow and limited in his response to Russia's gross violation of international treaties guaranteeing European borders, and, even more so, Iran — where a growing number of Democrats worry that Obama is offering too-generous terms while failing to challenge Iran's conventional aggression in the Middle East, at the expense of

Israel and traditional U.S. Arab allies.

The rift is not particularly ideological; this is not a case of Clinton and center-right allies facing off against Obama and the party's more liberal wing, as during the 2008 presidential primaries. Levin was a staunch opponent of the Iraq War, as was Daalder. Smith has been a strong Obama supporter. One of the co-sponsors of the arms-for-Ukraine legislation was Sen. Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio, one of the most liberal members of the caucus.

Rather, it has more to do with Obama's extreme caution in responding to international challenges, as in Syria and Ukraine, and his radical faith that longstanding U.S. adversaries can be converted into strategic partners. Obama's reaction to the Iraq War, which has been to avoid even indirect U.S. military engagement in all other international conflicts, has had the effect of creating common cause between anti-Iraq doves like Levin and Daalder and relative hawks such as Clinton.

Similarly, Obama's belief that Iran, if granted its nuclear infrastructure and what it regards as its rightful place in the Middle East, will play a constructive role in ending the wars in Syria and Iraq looks scary not just to senators like Menendez but also to longtime Obama allies like Virginia's Tim Kaine, who said in a recent Senate hearing that he had "a series of very significant concerns" about the emerging deal with Tehran.

So far, there's little sign that the Democratic criticism has had much effect on Obama. He's still balking at significant intervention in Syria, still [undecided on weapons for] Ukraine, still intently focused on cutting a deal with Iran. If and when that comes, the showdown with his own party may begin.

Jackson Diehl is deputy editorial page editor for The Washington Post.

Defeating Islamic State requires comprehensive strategy

BY PAUL MCMALE

Speaking before the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, last month, Secretary of State John Kerry described the global terrorism as "nothing more than criminal anarchy, a nihilism which illegitimately claims an ideological and religious foundation." Is he serious? A de facto Islamic caliphate has now been established in the heart of the Middle East and Kerry sees it as nothing more than a criminal conspiracy. Quick, call the cops.

The Obama administration desperately wants to end wars, not fight them. Me, too. But the reality is that our enemies get a vote — and that's a hard truth that weak leaders have failed to grasp throughout modern history. Returning from Munich in 1938, Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain wanted to deliver "peace for our time." Instead, by pursuing a policy of appeasement, he ushered in the Second World War — a war that was ultimately fought and won by clear-eyed, tough-minded leaders like Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill.

By consistently articulating a policy of detached complacency — untethered to the battlefield reality in Iraq and Syria — President Barack Obama is doing his best to declare (though not deliver) peace for our time. Like Chamberlain, he's doomed to failure. And much like the period preceding World War II, that failure of presidential leadership places millions of lives in jeopardy.

Do Obama and Kerry really believe that the pathetically weak, disjointed and nearly incoherent actions taken so far by

their administration will "degrade and ultimately destroy" the hardened (and increasingly experienced) fighters of the Islamic State? Is there any sign of that success to date? Every military analysis I've seen indicates that the training mission in Iraq has achieved little success — and that the training of opposition forces to fight against the Islamic State in Syria is in even worse shape.

As President John F. Kennedy said, "We can do better."

So here are some thoughts regarding the core elements of a comprehensive strategy to defeat the Islamic State and other mutating forms of Islamic extremism:

Lead from the front. The president needs to toughen up. He's got the necessary rhetorical skills, but six years into office his convictions seem only as deep as his teleprompter. Sober up, sir. There's a war on. You own it. Mess this one up and no one will remember the rest of your legacy. Serious leadership — long overdue — will require that most of the White House national security team be replaced by serious people. Political operatives need not apply for the vacancies.

Recognize the threat. Islamic extremism is not a criminal conspiracy — it is a unified, if often inconsistent, ideology of barbaric intolerance. It's not Islam. It's not a part of Islam. It is, in fact, a strategic threat to the fundamental decency of Islam. The American people get that. So stop groveling before the fear of religious intolerance and pursue the necessary policies that will protect the American people. Crush the Islamic State.

Fight the battle of ideas. The Obama ad-

ministration should use all of its whiz-kid social media skills to challenge the moral and political legitimacy of the Islamic State. Inspire young Americans to defend their freedom — online, in print, through protest and by conviction. In the context of individual liberty, aggressively pursue a truthful and relentless comparison between our beliefs and those of Islamic extremism. In that confrontation, our ideals can take the heat.

Build a diplomatic coalition. In the spirit of Roosevelt and Churchill's 1941 Atlantic Charter, Kerry's State Department should draft a short statement of first principles — a robust defense of individual freedom, tolerance and religious liberty — that by design will stand in sharp contrast to the barbarism of the Islamic State. Give it a good name and get it done within two weeks. Coordinate the first draft with three or four close allies. Jointly release it — and then invite the world's nations to sign by the end of the Obama administration at the signing ceremonies.

Put boots on the ground. Define the war aims with clarity — and accept accountability for success. Determine how many U.S. military forces — mostly special operators and combat support personnel — will be required to push the Islamic State back into Syria by the end of the Obama administration. My estimate would be 20,000. Expect casualties. Mentor the Iraqi army at the front lines. Set no deadline for the withdrawal of U.S. forces — but begin planning a U.S. retrograde and anticipate Iraq's future border security requirements. Invite military partners to join in the fight — and make it clear that Europe's

domestic security — and future Middle East stability — will be determined by the outcome of this fight.

Anticipate enduring conflict. Islamic extremism will be with us for decades. We can diminish the number of extremists. We can limit their capacity for violence. We can shape our military to address the threat. But it will be a long time before the ideology of Islamic extremism is fully discredited. The American people should be told that truth.

Budget for war. Fight hard and tenaciously for the repeal of sequestration. Explain why that's important — and then budget realistically for the challenges that lie ahead. Consider a dedicated tax increase. In this and every generation, Americans are prepared to sacrifice in defense of their freedom — so long as their leaders are courageous enough to tell them why that sacrifice is necessary. To date, such political courage has been in short supply.

Enable future presidential leadership. Set the conditions during the remaining years of the Obama administration so that the next president can effectively carry on the fight.

Obama wants to deliver peace for our time. Neville Chamberlain and Winston Churchill laid out the options. Now Mr. President, you choose.

Paul McAle is a former Democratic member of Congress from Pennsylvania, a former assistant secretary of defense and a retired Marine colonel. This column first appeared in The Philadelphia Inquirer.

SKIING: WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Injured stars plan to compete

By PAT GRAHAM
The Associated Press

BEAVER CREEK, Colo. — Bode Miller and Aksel Lund Svindal will compete in just about anything, even who can return faster from surgery.

This race, though, between friendly rivals was almost too close to call.

A little more than two months removed from a procedure to fix a herniated disk in his back, the 37-year-old Miller said Monday he's hoping to race in the super-G, downhill and possibly the super-combined at the world championships.

Later that day, and not to be outdone, Svindal, the standout from Norway, announced he was going to test out his torn left Achilles in a downhill training session Tuesday to see if it can hold up to the rigors of racing. Svindal had what was thought to be season-ending surgery in October.

Although they're on the mend, no way these two veterans — with a combined 781 World Cup starts and nine Olympic medals — can be any sort of factor at worlds, right?

"I wouldn't be surprised if either one of them is on the podium in this world championships," said Norwegian skier Kjetil Jansrud, who won the super-G at the Sochi Olympics. "Aksel's been injured before and knows what it takes to get back. And Bode, he's such a good skier that he can show up anywhere and do well if his back is OK."

"It's good for the sport, having the big stars back."

The 32-year-old Svindal's return in time for the worlds was somewhat of a stunner. Even his doctors didn't think he'd be back this soon. Svindal will wear a boot that has some of the foam taken out, since his Achilles is now about four times its original size. But there's no longer any pain.



BRENNAN LINSLEY/AP

People stand in front of a screen during the opening ceremony for the FIS Alpine World Ski Championships on Monday in Beaver Creek, Colo.

Still, Svindal's a little fearful of one thing — being slow.

"The only risk would be that I [stink]. That's a risk I'm willing to take," said Svindal, the defending world champion in the downhill. "If you don't race, you don't have a chance. At least I'm here and have a chance of making something happen."

Same goes for Miller. This is a course that favors his aggressive style of skiing. He's won four times on the Birds of Prey course.

"Everything went as well as I could've hoped," Miller said of his recovery. "I'm here and ready to race."

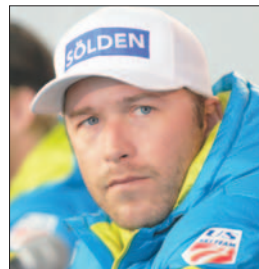
"I'm going to try to win the races. If I'm healthy enough to make it down that, that's sort of my goal."

Here are some things to know as the men start the world championships Wednesday with a super-G race:

Trifecta: Ted Ligety, of Park City, Utah, certainly has a lot on his plate at worlds as he tries to defend his super-G, giant slalom and super-combined titles from two years ago in Austria. No added pressure, he insisted. At least not yet. "Defending all three would be a dream come true, but I don't think that's necessarily the most realistic expectation," Ligety said. "I'm going to try to ski hard and I think these hills are really good for me. If there's a place where it would be possible to repeat, this would be one of the better places. It's not something I'm consumed about."

A cut above: Jansrud has been winning races this season with his hair long, but recently decided to get it cut. "Stupid, huh?" Jansrud said. "We'll see how well that works out. I did it in Aspen. It wasn't the cheapest haircut I've ever had."

Marvelous Marcel: Want to watch a



BRENNAN LINSLEY/AP

Bode Miller participates in a news conference on the first day of the world ski championships on Monday in Beaver Creek, Colo. Miller plans to race.

skier with perfect tempo on the course? Check out Marcel Hirscher of Austria. He leads the World Cup overall standings as he tries to win his fourth straight. Hirscher also is the reigning world champion in the slalom.

War horse: The bigger the stage, the better Andrew Weibrecht, of Lake Placid, N.Y., seems to ski. He can't exactly figure why that is, either. In 107 World Cup starts, the skier nicknamed "War Horse" has never been on the podium. But in Olympic super-G starts, he's 2-for-2 — capturing third at the 2010 Vancouver Games and second in Sochi. "Just really fortunate timing," said Weibrecht, who took fifth during a super-G in Austria on Jan. 23, his best-ever World Cup finish. "For sure, there's a lot more energy [at big events]."

Ski like it's 1999: There could be four skiers in the field who participated in the 1999 world championships at Beaver Creek: Austria's Benjamin Raich, Croatia's Ivica Kostelic, Mexico's Hubertus Von Hohenlohe and Miller. "It's a long time ago," Miller said.

Vonn eager for 'her Olympics' in her hometown

By PAT GRAHAM
The Associated Press

BEAVER CREEK, Colo. — Lindsey Vonn is treating the world championships in her hometown almost like her Olympics. You know, the ones she missed last February because of a knee that required two surgeries.

The thought of this event got her through the toughest parts of rehabbing her knee.

"It's the Olympics, but, to me, it feels like it," said Vonn, whose competition kicked off Tuesday with a super-G race. "I feel like this is a great opportunity for me."

She's the one to beat in the speed events, especially now with no pressure on her shoulders. She recently broke Austrian giant Annemarie Moser-Proll's 35-year-old mark for most World Cup wins by a female skier. Vonn now has 64 World Cup wins after her victory in Switzerland during her last race before worlds.

Next on Vonn's list: making peace with the past. Two years ago at worlds in Schladming, Austria, Vonn crashed in the super-G and tore ligaments in her right knee. She tried to get back in time for the Sochi Games, only to reinjure the knee before worlds.

Before she tore up her knee,

Vonn thought that perhaps this event would be her last major one. But she's had second thoughts and hopes to stick around until the 2018 Games in South Korea. But those are thoughts for another time.

Her focus is on a new women's race course dubbed "Raptor" that offers a little bit for everyone: It's steep, tight, demanding and daunting.

"It's in-your-face the entire way," Vonn said. "Definitely very challenging. It's going to be fun."

In other words, perfect for Vonn. Lara Gut and Tina Maze, too. All the top ski racers, for that matter.

While the world championships always seem to produce a surprise winner or two, this is the kind of slope that really favors the favorites.

"The hill is so challenging. I think only the best can win," Liechtenstein's Tina Weirather said.

And that's why all eyes are on Vonn.

"She is skiing amazing," Gut said. "She's back and back to 100 percent. Lindsey, for sure [is a favorite]."

Same goes for Gut.

The skiers received a glimpse of the course in 2013, while Vonn was sidelined by her knee, and

Gut dominated. The Swiss stand-out captured the super-G and downhill races.

"It just means I am fast here. But I'm not the only one," Gut said.

There's also Austria's Anna Fenninger, the super-G champion in Sochi, and Maze, the defending world champion in the event.

Here are some things to know as the world championships return to Beaver Creek:

The defense rests: Marion Rolland of France won't get a chance to defend her downhill crown at worlds after tearing the ACL in her right knee in a crash during a super-G in mid-January. There won't be a repeat winner in the super-combined, either, since reigning champ Maria Hoefl-Riesch of Germany retired from racing before the season.

Star power: Don't be surprised if Tiger Woods shows up, maybe even wearing that skeleton-patterned mask again to stay incognito. The golfer flew in to support Vonn in Italy as she broke Moser-Proll's mark. It was a painful experience, though, as Woods got hit in the mouth by a camera and lost a tooth.

Cat fancy: Fenninger is fast on the slopes. No wonder her favorite animal is the cheetah. She wears a cheetah-themed print on her



MARCO TROVATI/AP

Switzerland's Lara Gut completes a practice run for the women's world championship downhill on Monday in Beaver Creek, Colo.

helmet and serves as an ambassador for a group raising awareness for the plight of the big cat. Fenninger had quite a season last year, winning the World Cup overall title. The perfect season? "It was," she said.

Home cooking: Olympic slalom champion Mikaela Shiffrin said the best part of having worlds so close to her Eagle-Vail home is getting to sleep in her own bed. Shiffrin will defend her world slalom title on Feb. 14. She

will also race in the giant slalom, but skip the super-combined because of the downhill course. "I don't think I'm ready to race in that kind of speed environment," Shiffrin said.

Host-italy: Nicole Foss of Austria is growing quite fond of Colorado snow. She won a slalom race in Aspen in November. Shoff said the Beaver Creek course fits her well since, "you have to ski with a lot of confidence. That's what I like."

SPORTS BRIEFS



AARON BOGHOSIAN, THE BOSTON GLOBE/AP

Former New England Patriots player Aaron Hernandez, right, glances toward the Lloyd family during his murder trial at Bristol County Superior Court in Fall River, Mass., Tuesday.

Briefly

Bird hopeful George can play again this season

The Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Larry Bird hopes Paul George can return to the game this season after breaking his leg in a gruesome accident last summer — perhaps as soon as next month.

The Pacers president of basketball operations told reporters Tuesday that if George is cleared by doctors and ready to play, he would like to see the two-time All-Star compete.

George hasn't played since sustaining a compound fracture in his right leg on Aug. 1. Bird says he had been told a full recovery would take about seven months.

Coach Frank Vogel would not say how much work George is doing in practice but his activity has steadily increased. Vogel says getting into game shape and rhythm could add another month or two to the recovery process, but agreed with Bird's assessment.

McIlroy tries for settlement

DUBLIN — Rory McIlroy and his law-

yers held negotiations with his former agent Tuesday in a bid to reach a settlement in their multi-million-dollar court case.

The two sides met for five hours at the High Court complex in Dublin, and the case was adjourned until Wednesday morning.

The top-ranked golfer is suing Dublin-based Horizon Sports Management and its leading agent, Conor Ridge, claiming he was misled into signing a contract with the company. McIlroy initiated the case in 2013.

Judge Brian Cregan said progress had been made between the two sides Tuesday and he agreed to allow further last-minute talks to try to allow a long and costly trial. The case had been expected to last eight weeks.

McIlroy has said in court papers that he signed the contract at Horizon's Christmas party "in circumstances of great informality," and without having seen a draft of the agreement before it was given to him to sign.

Horizon is counter-suing, claiming McIlroy owes it millions of dollars in commissions.

McIlroy, who left Horizon to form his own management company in 2013, was expected to testify in court this week.

PGA caddies file lawsuit

SAN DIEGO — A group of PGA Tour caddies has filed a class-action lawsuit demanding that the tour compensate them for wearing bibs.

Some 80 caddies joined the federal suit filed Tuesday in Northern California. At issue is having to wear bibs that have the logo of the tournament sponsor. The caddies contend the PGA Tour is making \$50 million off the sponsors while the caddies get nothing.

The lawsuit stems from a dispute that has been brewing for more than a year. It also says the tour has denied caddies access to health care and pension plans.

Hernandez juror removed

Judge dismisses woman for discussing ex-Patriot's murder case

By MICHELLE R. SMITH
The Associated Press

FALL RIVER, Mass. — The judge overseeing the murder trial of former New England Patriots player Aaron Hernandez removed a juror Tuesday, saying there was evidence she had spoken about the case in previous years and had an early interest in being seated on the panel.

Bristol County Superior Court Judge Susan Garsh dismissed the juror after questioning her individually and closing the courtroom to hear evidence on the matter.

After a closed-door hearing that lasted more than 90 minutes, Garsh said there was credible evidence the juror specifically discussed an opinion about the case, including that it would be hard to convict Hernandez without the murder weapon. She said the juror also discussed several items of evidence that the court has ruled are inadmissible in this case.

"Over the last few years, the juror has expressed an interest in serving on this particular jury," Garsh said. "There is credible evidence that the juror has attended more Patriots games than were disclosed on the questionnaire."

Hernandez listened as Garsh spoke and tapped his thigh with the palm of his hand.

"Discharge of the juror is indeed in the best interest of justice," Garsh said.

It wasn't immediately clear what the judge would do about the dismissed juror's spot.

Previously, there were 18 jurors on the panel. Six of those will be randomly chosen as alternates immediately before deliberations begin.

The former Patriots standout is accused of the June 2013 killing of Odin Lloyd, a semipro football player who was dating his fiancée's sister. Hernandez, 25, had a \$40 million contract with the Patriots when he was arrested.

Proceedings began last week but were suspended Monday when a snowstorm hit. Tuesday was the first day back at the trial since the Patriots won the Super Bowl. The judge told jurors they were allowed to watch the game but had to leave the room or distance themselves if Hernandez's name came up.

The Tuesday morning session began with a lengthy private sidebar conversation among the judge, prosecutors and the defense. After about 20 minutes, the juror was called in.

In a separate murder case that has yet to go to trial, Hernandez was charged last year in Boston with killing two men in 2012 after someone spilled a drink on him at a nightclub. The judge has ruled that prosecutors in the Lloyd case cannot tell the jury about those slayings.

Hernandez faces life imprisonment if convicted of killing Lloyd.

Prince gets US OK for FIFA run

LONDON — FIFA vice president Prince Ali bin al-Hussein disclosed Tuesday that the United States was among the national associations to nominate him to stand against Sepp Blatter for the top job as he decried a "culture of intimidation" within the governing body.

The Jordanian was also endorsed for the May election by his home federation, Belarus, Malta, England and Georgia. But his inability to gain widespread backing beyond his homeland in the Asian Football Confederation highlights the tough task unseating Blatter, who is running for a fifth, four-year term.

"We had promises from him he wouldn't run again, but obviously that is not the case," Prince Ali said. "With full honesty and integrity, he should give a chance to others."

The AFC leadership has already endorsed Blatter to remain in charge, along with the South American, African and Oceania confederations.

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NBA



TONY DEJAK/AP

After being the focal point in Minnesota, Kevin Love is working to adapt to his new role alongside LeBron James and Kyrie Irving in Cleveland.

Love still trying to get his bearings with Cavaliers

By JON KRAWCZYNSKI
The Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — In his first game at Target Center since he was traded, it was abundantly clear to Kevin Love just how far away he has gotten from Minnesota.

Love spent six seasons with the Timberwolves totting on a team that couldn't stay healthy and never even sniffed the playoffs. Now he has LeBron James and Kyrie Irving on his side and the Cleveland Cavaliers are expecting to contend for a title.

With the Timberwolves, he was the focal point, putting up eye-popping numbers and earning three All-Star berths. In Cleveland, all of those numbers have dropped significantly while the wins have soared, leaving Love to make the same kind of adjustment that Chris Bosh did when he joined James in Miami.

When asked if it was a struggle to adapt, Love said "I'd be lying if I told you it wasn't. But finding different ways to be as efficient as possible, because it's something I prided myself on here. There's different ways to affect the game; I'm still learning that here, but we still have 35-plus games left. With that, we'll continue to evolve and change and get better."

Love is averaging nine fewer points, five fewer shots and shooting worse from the field and 3-point line than he did last season with the Wolves and will not be joining James and Irving in New York for All-Star weekend. But the Cavaliers are 29-20 and have won 10 straight games after beating Minnesota on Saturday night.

'There's different ways to affect the game; I'm still learning that here, but we still have 35-plus games left. With that, we'll continue to evolve and change and get better.'

Kevin Love
Cleveland Cavaliers

"I'm in a situation now where we're winning basketball games," Love said. "And I'm happy with that."

Even as Andrew Wiggins shows signs of becoming a star in Minnesota after the Cavaliers traded him, James is happy having Love by his side.

"I just think his basketball I.Q., people don't see that," James said. "The way he stretches the floor for us, his rebounding, his basketball I.Q. is really high and it adds to our team. It adds to our team as far as everything — knowing where guys are both offensively and defensively and he's been great."

Here are some other things to keep an eye on in the NBA this week:

Game of the week: The best in the West against the best in the East on Friday night when the Golden State Warriors visit the Atlanta Hawks. Atlanta has won 19 straight games and turned the one of the most lifeless home arenas in the NBA into a packed house every night.

Pop's milestone: Spurs coach Gregg Popovich is three wins shy of 1,000 for his career. The Spurs could get him there this week with home games against Orlando on Wednesday and Miami on Friday

and a trip to Toronto on Sunday.

Dame's revenge tour: Portland point guard Damian Lillard didn't hide his disappointment when he couldn't get a spot on the jani-packed Western Conference All-Star roster. The Blazers host Utah on Tuesday, Phoenix on Thursday and have a tough road back-to-back at Dallas and Houston on the weekend.

Rubio's return: Ricky Rubio is expected to make his return to the court after missing 42 games with a severely injured left ankle when his Minnesota Timberwolves visit the Dallas Mavericks on Monday. The Timberwolves were 2-2 when Rubio was injured on Nov. 7. They are 6-37 since.

Surging Grizzlies: Memphis has won 10 of its past 11 games to climb to the No. 2 seed in the West. The addition of Jeff Green is paying dividends and the Grizzlies play at Phoenix on Monday, at Utah on Wednesday, at Minnesota on Friday and host the Hawks on Sunday.

Stat of the week: Kyrie Irving went off for 55 points and 11-for-19 three-pointers to beat Portland on Wednesday. Irving saved his best for last, hitting a three-pointer in the closing seconds to lift the Cavs to a win with LeBron James sitting out with a wrist injury.

Roundup

Late shot pushes Nets past Clippers

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Jarrett Jack made a tiebreaking jumper with 1.3 seconds left, and the Brooklyn Nets used a late rally to beat the Los Angeles Clippers 102-100 on Monday night.

The Nets ended a seven-game home losing streak by erasing a nine-point deficit in the final 1:35, getting two three-pointers from Alan Anderson — one a four-point play — one from Joe Johnson and another from Deron Williams in his return from an 11-game absence.

But they went to Jack for their final possession after Chris Paul's layup tied it at 100 with 8.6 seconds to go. Jack dribbled right and lofted a jumper over 6-foot-11 center DeAndre Jordan, who had switched onto him.

Brook Lopez scored 24 points and Johnson had 22 for the Nets, who won at home for the first time since beating Sacramento on Dec. 29.

Jordan finished with 22 points, 20 rebounds and two made free throws in 12 attempts for the Clippers. Paul had 20 points, eight rebounds and eight assists.

The Clippers beat Brooklyn by 39 in Los Angeles last month and it appeared they had finally done enough to win this one when a basket by Matt Barnes made it 96-87 with 1:46 remaining. But they failed to grab the rebound when Johnson missed two free throws, and when the ball was tapped back to him, he nailed a three that cut it to 98-96 before Anderson made a three from the corner while being fouled, putting the Nets in front 100-98.

Thunder 104, Magic 97: Russell Westbrook's second triple-double of the season and 10th of his career helped host Oklahoma City defeat Orlando without the injured Kevin Durant.

Westbrook, an All-Star point guard, had 25 points, 14 assists and 11 rebounds.

Durant sat out with a sprained big toe on his left foot. He has played in just 22 games this season, having missed time earlier in the season with a sprained right ankle and a broken bone in his right foot.

Hornets 92, Wizards 88: Al Jefferson had 18 points and 12 rebounds, leading Charlotte past host Washington.

Michael Kidd-Gilchrist added 13 points and 13 rebounds, Brian Roberts scored 18 points, and Gerald Henderson put in 17 for the Hornets, who have won six of eight.

Bradley Beal led Washington with 18 points and a season-high 11 rebounds.

Bucks 82, Raptors 75: Khris Middleton scored 25 points, Giannis Antetokounmpo had 12 points and 12 rebounds, and short-handed Milwaukee snapped a six-game losing streak against host Toronto.

Reduced to nine players when guard Brandon Knight was ruled out before the game with a sore right quadriceps muscle, Milwaukee lost another body when guard O.J. Mayo was ejected after picking up a double technical at 4:07 of the second.

Mavericks 100, Timberwolves 94: Monta Ellis scored 23 points and Dallas won their first game without injured point guard Rajon Rondo, beating visiting Minnesota in the first game in nearly three months for Timberwolves point guard Ricky Rubio.

Rubio, sidelined since severely spraining his left ankle Nov. 7, had 10 points on 4-for-9 shooting with four assists in 21 minutes.

Grizzlies 102, Suns 101: Jeff Green converted a three-point play with 4.5 seconds to play as Memphis rallied from seven down in the final 1:35 to beat host Phoenix for the seventh straight time.

Marco Gasol blocked Markieff Morris' shot at the finish to preserve the victory.



MARY ALTAFF/AP

Nets center Brook Lopez, left, and Clippers center DeAndre Jordan reach for a loose ball on Monday. Brooklyn won 102-100.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

VCU makes adjustments after losing Weber

By HANK KURZ JR.
The Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. — The 18th-ranked VCU Rams will have to make some adjustments moving forward without injured floor leader and defensive lynchpin Briante Weber — changing the way they play won't be one of them.

Weber tore the ACL, the MCL and the meniscus in his right knee late in the Rams' loss to Richmond on Saturday. Surgery which could come in about two weeks after the swelling goes down, coach Shaka Smart said Monday.

"We'll adjust some things," Smart said. "I think your personality changes a little bit any time you lose a dominant figure on your team, but at the same time, we're not going to cancel the season."

"We're still going to play the way that we play. There may be some adjustments in terms of some of the Xs and Os stuff we do on both ends of the floor, but we're still going to be us."

Weber, a senior point guard, was the lead orchestrator of the Rams' 'Havoc' style and has led the nation in steals percentage the last three years. He was leading the nation with 3.9 steals per game this season and was in 23 steals away from breaking the NCAA career record of 385 set by John Linehan of Providence



ZACH GIBSON/AP

VCU guard Briante Weber, front, and George Washington guard Kethan Savage fight for a loose ball last week in Richmond, Va. Weber, who was injured over the weekend in a game against Richmond, will have season-ending knee surgery.

in 2002.

The Rams (17-4, 7-1 Atlantic 10) are back in action Wednesday night at George Mason (7-13,

2-6).

VCU absorbed a double dose of disappointment on Saturday, seeing its 12-game winning streak

‘We’re still going to play the way that we play. There may be some adjustments in terms of some of the Xs and Os stuff we do on both ends of the floor, but we’re still going to be us.’

Shaka Smart
VCU coach

end in a 64-55 loss to crosstown rival Richmond, and then seeing the always energetic Weber writhing in pain on the floor. He was injured with just over three minutes left when he attempted a jump-stop in the lane.

Unable to practice again until Monday, the team has focused on supporting Weber after getting the details of his injury late Saturday. Smart said Weber has pushed them to get back to work.

"He's been very resilient so far. He's had a terrific attitude," Smart said. "The things that he has said to me and to his teammates about our team and about what we need to do have been terrific. I think he is ready to attack any type of rehab and any type of comeback. Bri's is always a highly energetic guy."

To replace Weber, the Rams will turn primarily to JeQuan Lewis and freshman Jonathan Williams, but they expect to have

Weber on the bench for home and road games before and after his surgery.

"He's still a big part of our leadership team," the coach said.

Smart said the hardest part of seeing Weber's college career end as it did was the idea that, as a senior, he won't get a chance to do it over as he would as an underclassman. Still, his legacy will not just be as one of the best defenders in program history, but also of a player whose growth as an individual mirrors what coaches hope to see when they recruit a player.

"He's grown a great deal and I think great evidence of that is just the way he's responded with his teammates since this injury occurred," Smart said, noting his refusal to feel sorry for himself.

"He could be caught up in himself and down in the dumps and upset," Smart said, "but he's been great."

Roundup

No. 3 Virginia dominates 2nd half to down UNC

The Associated Press

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. — Virginia responded to its first loss by sharpening its focus back on what it carried the third-ranked Cavaliers to their best start in three decades.

The result was an impressive road win against a highly ranked league opponent, the kind that proves — if there was any question — that Tony Bennett's veteran-led team isn't easily shaken.

Malcolm Brogdon scored 17 points and Virginia's defense locked up No. 12 North Carolina in the second half to win 75-64 on Monday night.

Justin Anderson added 16 for the Cavaliers (20-1, 8-1 Atlantic Coast Conference), who regrouped after blowing an 11-point second-half lead in a 69-63 home loss to Duke over the weekend.

"They fought," Bennett said. "I think we got back to the mentality that we needed to. ... Our way, it's a blue-collar way, it's a fighting way, and I think our guys responded well and really rallied."

They forced tough shots against the Tar Heels (17-6, 7-3). They refused to cede transition chances. They closed out on the three-point shot that Duke used Saturday in a late barrage that ended their unbeaten start.

By late in this one, Virginia had turned a 33-32 halftime deficit into an 18-point lead and driven many of the home fans to the exits with 3½ minutes left.

Bennett said he put the team through a tough practice Sunday with the goal of getting back to "some good, old-fashioned, blue-collar basketball."

"The guys, when they do that and they're right," he said, "they can play."

Virginia shot 52 percent, with Brogdon leading a balanced offense and the defensive effort on preseason all-American Marcus Paige.

After shooting 52 percent in the first half, UNC went just 11-for-29 (38 percent) after halftime.

"They kicked our rear ends," UNC coach Roy Williams said. "That's the bottom line."

Paige finished with 15 on 5-for-10 shooting, though he went scoreless for nearly 33 minutes until scoring 10 in the final 2½ minutes long after Virginia had taken control.

No. 8 Kansas 89, No. 11 Iowa State 76: Wayne Selden Jr. scored 19 points in a hot-shooting second half to spark host Kansas past Iowa State.

Selden, after missing all three of his shots and scoring only one point in the first half, drilled four

of his first five three-pointers after intermission, often finding himself virtually unguarded on the right wing, as the Jayhawks (19-3, 8-1 Big 12) padded their lead in the Big 12 race to 1½ games.

Georges Niang had 24 points for Iowa State (16-5, 6-3), which dropped out of a second-place tie with West Virginia.

Leading 35-28 after a seesaw first half, the Jayhawks reeled off a 14-6 run the first 4 minutes, 45 seconds after intermission, with Selden scoring eight points, including two uncontested three-pointers. Iowa State called time out and tried to regroup after Selden's second three-pointer put Kansas on top 49-34 but never got the lead under nine points.

Perry Ellis's three-point play gave the Jayhawks' breathing room at 77-63 with less than 3 minutes left. Ellis had 17 points and Kelly Oubre Jr. had 16 for the Jayhawks, who have beaten Iowa State at home 10 straight times.

Bryce Dejean-Jones had 14 points for Iowa State and Monte Morris had 12.

In a back-and-forth first half, Iowa State's defense forced Kansas to take several bad shots as the Cyclones surged to an early 7-point lead.



GERRY BROOME/AP

Virginia's Justin Anderson, left, dunks as North Carolina's Brice Johnson looks on during Monday's game in Chapel Hill, N.C. Anderson scored 16 points in Virginia's 75-64 win.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL/NHL



Kentucky's Devin Booker, right, shoots over Alabama's Riley Norris during the first half on Saturday in Lexington, Ky. No. 1 Kentucky is the only SEC team guaranteed to get a bid to the NCAA tournament.

Will SEC's balance provide more bids?

By STEVE MEGARGEY
The Associated Press

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. — The Southeastern Conference men's basketball pool appears deeper than usual, even though it's not reflected in the Top 25.

"I think the league top to bottom is the best since I've been here," Kentucky coach John Calipari said.

Although No. 1 Kentucky is its sole representative in the Top 25, the SEC had nine schools among the top 60 teams in the RPI as of Monday, the most of any conference. Some mock NCAA tournament brackets have six SEC teams making the field.

The SEC hasn't received as many as six NCAA bids in one season since 2008. The league earned only three invitations each of the past two seasons.

"I think it's probably by far the strongest that it's been in the last several years," Georgia coach Mark Fox said, "and hopefully we'll see that depth rewarded come March."

The SEC has plenty of NCAA tournament candidates, but only Kentucky can feel certain about earning an invitation. A look at the RPI reflects the precarious fate of the other SEC contenders.

Kentucky's the only SEC team rated 23rd or higher. Other teams in the top 60 are Arkansas (24), Georgia (27), Texas A&M (32), LSU (40), Mississippi (47), Tennessee (54), Florida (57) and Alabama (59). For comparison's sake, the Big 12 has five teams rated 21st or better and the Atlantic Coast Conference and Big East each have five teams in the top 30.

The SEC has outperformed pessimistic early season projections, but that doesn't necessarily mean it will get more bids than the last couple of years.

"People have a tendency to

make a quick knee-jerk reaction on the strength of a league based on early season play," CBS Sports analyst Doug Gottlieb said. "The reality is the league actually has some really good nonconference wins. Like any league, you have teams figuring it out and starting to put it together. You've got a group of five teams or so that, as long as they can get to 11 or 12 wins in the league and have a win or two over the top of the league and one or two over one of the top teams in other leagues, they're going to have a good argument for getting in."

Gottlieb said the SEC needs its NCAA tournament contenders to perform well enough in conference play that "there's a clear break" between them and the bottom teams in the league. In that regard, the SEC didn't help itself Saturday.

Georgia (14-6, 5-3 SEC) lost at South Carolina (11-9, 2-6, LSU (6-5, 5-3) fell at Mississippi State (10-11, 3-5), Arkansas (6-5, LSU) also hurt its cause by losing at Florida (12-9, 5-3). The league is so jumbled that six teams are tied for third place with 5-3 conference records.

Those results reflect the league's improved balance — and its lack of elite teams beyond Kentucky. SEC Network analyst Dan Bradshaw said the SEC had too many teams last year "that were kind of pushovers" but indicated there's a "night and day" difference in the league's depth this season.

Kentucky isn't the only team with quality nonconference wins. South Carolina, which is tied for 11th in the conference standings, beat No. 11 Iowa State on a neutral court and Oklahoma State at home. LSU won at No. 15 West Virginia. Arkansas won at No. 23 SMU. Georgia won at Kansas State. Tennessee beat Kansas State and No. 22 Butler at home.

NHL scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Tampa Bay	51	32	15	4	68	166	133
Montreal	49	32	14	3	67	130	111
Detroit	50	29	17	2	67	149	129
Florida	48	21	17	10	52	118	138
Ottawa	48	20	19	9	49	136	138
Toronto	51	22	25	4	48	144	156
Buffalo	50	14	33	3	31	94	179
Metropolitan Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
N.Y. Islanders	49	32	16	5	65	158	139
Pittsburgh	50	28	14	8	64	145	129
N.Y. Rangers	48	29	15	4	62	145	121
Washington	50	25	15	10	60	147	129
Philadelphia	52	22	27	3	51	140	151
New Jersey	49	22	26	1	45	125	140
Columbus	48	21	24	3	45	120	151
Carolina	49	17	26	6	40	105	129

Metropolitan Division

GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA	
N.Y. Islanders	50	32	16	8	65	158	139
Pittsburgh	50	28	14	8	64	145	129
N.Y. Rangers	48	29	15	4	62	145	115
Washington	50	25	10	10	60	141	125
Philadelphia	51	22	22	7	51	140	151
New Jersey	50	19	22	9	47	138	138
Columbus	48	21	24	3	40	120	151
Carolina	49	17	26	6	40	105	129

Western Conference

Central Division

GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA	
Nashville	49	32	11	6	70	149	115
St. Louis	49	32	13	4	68	160	120
Chicago	50	31	17	2	64	146	125
Winnipeg	52	26	18	8	60	144	137
Dallas	49	23	19	7	63	157	159
Colorado	50	21	18	11	53	131	143
Minnesota	49	23	20	6	52	135	140

Pacific Division

GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA	
Anaheim	50	32	12	6	70	147	134
San Jose	51	27	17	6	61	142	140
Calgary	51	28	20	3	59	149	171
Vancouver	48	27	18	5	57	131	124
Los Angeles	49	21	18	12	54	134	132
Arizona	50	18	26	6	42	116	170
Edmonton	51	14	28	37	126	170	170

Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss.

Sunday's games

Arizona 3, Montreal 2	St. Louis 4, Washington 3
Nashville 4, Pittsburgh 0	Minnesota 4, Vancouver 2

Monday's games

Edmonton 5, San Jose 4, SO	N.Y. Rangers 5, Florida 3
Calgary 5, Winnipeg 2	

Tuesday's games

Ottawa at New Jersey	Florida at N.Y. Islanders
Los Angeles at Washington	Arizona at Columbus
Buffalo at Montreal	Tampa Bay at St. Louis
Toronto at Nashville	Chicago at Minnesota
Colorado at Dallas	Winnipeg at Vancouver
Carolina at Anaheim	

Wednesday's games

Boston at N.Y. Rangers	Pittsburgh at Edmonton
San Jose at Calgary	

Thursday's games

St. Louis at Buffalo	N.Y. Islanders at Philadelphia
Washington at Ottawa	Los Angeles at Florida
Anaheim at Nashville	Tampa Bay at Dallas
Detroit at Colorado	Carolina at Arizona
San Jose at Vancouver	

Friday's games

Toronto at New Jersey	Anaheim at Washington
St. Louis at Columbus	Chicago at Winnipeg
Pittsburgh at Calgary	

Monday

Flames 5, Jets 2

Winnipeg

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100
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Calgary

First Period—1, Winnipeg, 1-0

14 (Little, Ladd), 1:09, 2, Calgary, Jones 8 (Giordano), 4:16.

Second Period—3, Calgary, Raymond 7

(Bates), 1:59.

Third Period—4, Calgary, Diaz 1 (Bouma, Colborne), 4:24 (pp.), 5, Calgary, Bollig 1 (Colborne, Byron), 7:23, 5, Winnipeg, Little 19 (Ladd, Chiarot), 8:43, 7, Calgary, Monahan 17 (Gaudreau, Russell), 10:27 (en).

Shots on Goal—Winnipeg 6-6-19.

Calgary 8-8-12—28.

Power-play opportunities—Winnipeg 0 of 2, Calgary 1 of 3.

Goals—Winnipeg, Hutchinson 14-7-2 (23 shots-19 saves), Pavelski 7-23 (23-4), Calgary, Hiller 16-14-12 (19-17).

A—18,824 (19,289), T—2:26.

Rangers 6, Panthers 3

Florida

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100
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N.Y. Rangers

First Period—1, Florida, Barkov 6 (Boysen), 4:09, 2, N.Y. Rangers, Nash 30, 8:49 (sh).

Second Period—3, N.Y. Rangers, K.Fayes 7 (Zuccarello, McDonough), 2:51 (pp.), 4, N.Y. Rangers, Staal 3 (Fast, Hagelin), 9:28, 5, Florida, Bolland 2 (Bergenheim, Jokinen), 12:51, 6, Florida, Pirri 7 (Bolland, Boysen), 15:30 (pp.).

Third Period—7, N.Y. Rangers, Boyle 6, 8:10, 8, N.Y. Rangers, Zuccarello 8 (Kreider, Brossard), 10:58, 9, N.Y. Rangers, Nash 31 (Stapano), 18:07 (en).

Shots on Goal—Florida 12-10-14-36.

N.Y. Rangers 9-8-21—38.

Power-play opportunities—Florida 1 of 1, N.Y. Rangers 1 of 2.

Goals—Florida, Luongo 18-13-8 (37 shots-32 saves), N.Y. Rangers, Lindqvist 25-11-3 (36-33).

A—18,006 (18,006), T—2:27.

Oilers 5, Sharks 4 (SO)

Edmonton

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100
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San Jose

Edmonton won shootout 2-1

First Period—1, San Jose, Pavelski 26 (Marleau, Thornton), 11:50 (pp.), 2, Edmonton, Baurle 14 (Hall, Klefbom), 18:03.

Second Period—2, Edmonton, Eberle 15 (Schultz, Nugent-Hopkins), 22, 4, Edmonton, D.Roy 5 (Vokopuk), 9:38.

Third Period—5, San Jose, Hannan 1 (Thornton, Pavelski), 2:19, 6, San Jose, Tennessy 2 (Kennedy, Niemi), 3:49, 7, San Jose, Pavelski 27 (Burns, Thornton), 9:28, 8, Edmonton, Schultz 4 (Purcell, Lander), 17:23.

Shootout—Edmonton 2 (D.Roy, N.G., Eberle, N.G., Purcell, N.G., Vokopuk, N.G., Nugent-Hopkins, G. Fraser, N.G., Aulie, N.G., Schultz, N.G., Lander, N.G., Klefbom, G. Gordon, N.G., Petry, N.G., Klinkhammer, G.), San Jose 1 (Couture, N.G., Pavelski, N.G., Thornton, N.G., Marleau, N.G., Burns, G. Karlsson, N.G., Hertl, N.G., Goodrow, N.G., Tennessy, N.G., Kennedy, N.G., Sheppard, N.G., Niemi, N.G., Irwin, N.G.).

Shots on Goal—Edmonton 16-12-12.

0-40, San Jose 12-12-11-27-37.

Power-play opportunities—Edmonton 0 of 1, San Jose 1 of 2.

Goals—Edmonton, Fasth 5-11-2 (37 shots-33 saves), San Jose, Niemi 21-11-6 (40-36).

A—17,376 (17,562), T—2:51.

NHL roundup

Oilers outlast Sharks

The Associated Press

SAN JOSE, Calif. — Jordan Eberle scored twice in regulation and Rob Klinkhammer scored in the 13th round of the shootout to help the Edmonton Oilers snap a 15-game losing streak in California by beating the San Jose Sharks 5-4 on Monday night.

Justin Schultz tied the game with 2:37 remaining and Derek Roy also scored for the Oilers, who last won in the Golden State on April 1, 2011, when they beat Anaheim 2-1.

Viktor Fasth made 33 saves, robbing Joe Pavelski of a potential hat trick in the closing seconds of regulation and stopping 12 of 13 shots in the shootout.

Scott Hannan and Matt Tennessy also scored for the Sharks, who had a three-game winning streak snapped to provide a dismal ending to what had been a strong seven-game homestand.

Antti Niemi made 36 saves.

Bruce Boudreau and Ryan Nugent-Hopkins traded goals in the fifth round of the shootout and that was all either team got until Klinkhammer ended it by beating Niemi with a forehand.

Rangers 6, Panthers 3: Dan Boyle scored a deflected goal 8:10 into the third period, and Rick Nash and Mats Zuccarello added insurance late as host New York beat Florida.

Boyle flipped a shot from the left point that hit the stick of veteran Florida defenseman Willie Mitchell and bounced past surprised goalie Roberto Luongo. Zuccarello made it 5-3 with 4:02 left.

Cal Hagelin was stopped by Luongo on a penalty shot with 3:19 remaining to keep it a two-goal game, but Nash scored into an empty net at 18:07.

Aleksander Barkov, Dave Bolland and Brandon Pirri had goals for the Panthers.

Flames 5, Jets 2: Brandon Bollig and Raphael Diaz scored their first goals of the season as host Calgary beat Winnipeg.

With a one-goal head leading into the third period, the Flames struck on the power play at 4:24, making it 3-2. Then, 8:10, a rocket so far from the blue line that found the top corner.

Bollig made it 4-1 at 7:23, converting a pass from Joe Colborne for his first goal in 61 games.

David Jones, Mason Raymond and Sean Monahan also scored for Calgary. Blake Wheeler and Bryan Little had the goals for Winnipeg.



Edmonton left wing Rob Klinkhammer, right, scores the winning goal past San Jose goalie Antti Niemi during the 13th round of the shootout Monday in San Jose, Calif. Edmonton won the game 5-4.

ERIC RISSBERG/AP

NFL



MATT SLOCUM/AP

New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady holds up Vince Lombardi Trophy after the Patriots defeated the Seattle Seahawks 28-24 in Super Bowl XLIX on Sunday. Brady, 37, hopes to play well into his 40s.

Brady not ready to rest

Pats quarterback looks ahead to more Super Bowls wins

By BARRY WILNER

The Associated Press

PHOENIX — Tom Brady knows what's next: more Super Bowl wins.

At least he hopes so.

The most successful quarterback of his era was still riding the high of his fourth NFL championship on the morning after New England's 28-24 victory over Seattle. Brady had every right to look back at his four touchdown passes against the NFL's top-ranked defense and beam. Instead, he was looking ahead.

"I am still kind of in the midst of my career," Brady said Monday before being presented with a car and his third Super Bowl MVP trophy, tying him with his boyhood idol, Joe Montana. "I just love the game. I love playing. I love representing our team."

That team — or previous versions of the Patriots he has quarterbacked — won three Super Bowls in four years, then lost in its next two trips to the big game. Brady knows how close the Patriots came to a third straight flop against the NFC champion, needing an interception with 20 seconds to go to clinch the crown.

"We've been on the other end of this two times in the last seven years, being ahead late in the game with the chance to win it, and not closing it out," Brady said of losses in 2008 and 2012 to the New York Giants. "I'm glad we had the opportunity to do it. Coach talked all week about how it was going to take all 60 minutes and it certainly did."

"I am still kind of in the midst of my career. I just love the game. I love playing. I love representing our team."

Tom Brady

New England Patriots quarterback

"It never broke our will. We were down 10 in the fourth quarter (and Seattle) being on the 1-yard line with 20 seconds left, but the guys never gave up. And you fight until the end and great things happen."

Brady knows all about great things, obviously. A two-time league MVP, he threw for four touchdowns against the NFL's stingiest defense, and led a comeback from a 10-point deficit through three quarters. He connected on all eight of his throws on the decisive drive that ended with a 3-yard TD pass to Julian Edelman.

Brady is 37 and has said he hopes to play well into his 40s, and he works hard to stay in top physical shape. So he doesn't see his winning toast to Edelman as his final Super Bowl moment.

But he certainly recognizes how difficult the journey is.

"Yeah, absolutely," he said. "I was a young kid when we won those first three. I know in '04 after we beat the Eagles, I was like, 'I'm just ready for this to be over, get the offseason started,' just because we had experienced it. Obviously, with some perspective of that game, it's a hard thing to get here and then it's a hard

thing to win the game.

"Playing against the other best team, obviously, one play here, one play there, all things change, and we've been on the other end of that, too. So I'm just proud that we really got a chance to finish it out."

His coach, Bill Belichick, recognizes the value of a likely first-ballot Hall of Fame quarterback running his offense. When the Patriots were being dominated by the Seahawks in the third quarter Sunday, Belichick understood that if they could keep it close, they had the closer.

"He's a great player," Belichick said. "It's been a great privilege to coach Tom for the last 15 years, 14 years as starting quarterback. We have a great relationship. We meet on a regular basis weekly several times."

"He's our leader. He competes as well as any player I've ever coached," Belichick added. "He's well-prepared. He has great poise and great presence. He may not always be perfect, as it is for any of us. We all have our moments, but Tom, like many other players on our team, is the guy that fights to the end and competes until the end."

Briefly

Super Bowl champs return to another New England storm

The Associated Press

BOSTON — The New England Patriots arrived safely in snow-bound Massachusetts on Monday night, following their dramatic 28-24 Super Bowl victory over the Seattle Seahawks in Arizona.

The team landed at Boston's Logan International Airport just before 7:30 p.m. local time and retweeted a message from running back Shane Vereen: "Boston! Your Champs just got home!! #hellonow #itscoldbutourtrophieskeepuswarm"

Players returned to a region weathering another major workday snowstorm that brought over a foot of new snow on top of nearly 3 feet already on the ground in places. Coach Bill Belichick and several players greeted fans braving the cold as they arrived at the stadium.

Boston had initially planned a victory parade through downtown on Tuesday, but that celebration was pushed back to Wednesday morning because of the weather.

Sherman played with torn elbow ligaments

PHOENIX — Seattle Seahawks cornerback Richard Sherman played the Super Bowl with torn ligaments in his left elbow and will likely need Tommy John surgery in the offseason.

Seattle coach Pete Carroll said Monday before the team left Arizona that it was his understanding that Sherman would need the surgery after the All-Pro cornerback was injured in the NFC championship game against Green Bay.

Sherman, who played in the Seahawks' 28-24 loss to New England without a brace on the elbow, is not the only Seattle star who could be facing offseason surgery.

All-Pro safety Earl Thomas may need to have the labrum in his left shoulder repaired and strong safety Kam Chancellor may need knee surgery.

NFL investigating fake crowd noise in Atlanta

ATLANTA — The NFL is trying to determine if the Atlanta Falcons pumped fake crowd noise into the Georgia Dome for home games the last two years.

Team spokesman Reggie Roberts said the team became aware of the league's investigation during the 2014 season.

The Falcons could be fined or penalized with the loss of a draft pick if found to have added fake crowd noise during the opposing team's huddles or when trying to call a play.

The investigation was first reported by ESPN.

Ryan updates tattoo to Buffalo Bills blue

NEW YORK — Rex Ryan's tattooed right arm went from Jets green to Bills blue.

The Wall Street Journal reported Monday that Ryan, in town before the Super Bowl, has ditched all of his old New York Jets apparel and needed to freshen up his body art.

"I mean, you've got to turn the page," Ryan told the newspaper.

So, he had the image of his wife in a Jets jersey — the original No. 6 was previously colored over in green — changed to a Bills jersey.

Ex-NFL star Sapp arrested in Phoenix

PHOENIX — Former NFL lineman and Hall of Famer Warren Sapp was arrested Monday on suspicion of soliciting a prostitute and allegedly assaulting two women, Phoenix police said.

Hours later, the NFL Network announced that it had terminated its contract with Sapp, who had worked as an analyst for the network since 2008 and was in Arizona for Sunday's Super Bowl in suburban Glendale.

Sapp, 42, made his initial appearance late Monday afternoon before a Phoenix Municipal Court judge and was released pending a Feb. 23 court date.

Authorities said Sapp faces a maximum penalty of \$2,500 in fines, six months in jail, three years' probation and mandatory 15 days in jail if convicted on the prostitution charge.

Colts sign CFL's Carter, son of Hall of Fame WR

INDIANAPOLIS — The Colts have made their first big offseason splash, signing former CFL receiver Duron Carter.

Terms of the deal were not announced Monday, but the 6-foot-5, 205-pound receiver was considered one of the top talents coming out of Canada this year. He is the son of Hall of Fame receiver Cris Carter.

Chargers: Hardwick will announce retirement

SAN DIEGO — The San Diego Chargers said 11-year veteran center Nick Hardwick was expected to announce his retirement Tuesday.

Hardwick, 33, had been the Chargers' starter since his rookie season of 2004. Hardwick started all 136 games he played in, including 67 straight.

He suffered a neck stinger in the 2014 opener and was placed on season-ending injured reserve.

SUPER BOWL



MATT YORK/AP

Seattle running back Marshawn Lynch (24) dives into the end zone for a 3-yard touchdown run Sunday during the first half of Super Bowl XLIX in Glendale, Ariz. Many people are questioning why Lynch didn't get the ball when the Seahawks had second-and-goal on the New England 1-yard with 26 seconds remaining. Instead, Seattle called for a pass that was intercepted.

Adding to the controversy

Seahawks' call latest in long line of questionable calls



CHARLES KRUPA/AP

Boston manager Grady Little's decision to leave exhausted starting pitcher Pedro Martinez, left, in the game during the eighth inning of Game 7 of the American League Championship Series ultimately cost the Red Sox their first World Series appearance in nearly 20 years.

By ARNIE STAPLETON
The Associated Press

The Seattle Seahawks had both the Lombardi Trophy and greatness in their grasp with 36 inches and 26 seconds to go.

They watched their coronation as a modern day dynasty slip away with the decision not to put the ball in Marshawn Lynch's hands.

In what some are viewing as one of the great miscalculations in sports history, offensive coordinator Darrell Bevell, backed by head coach Pete Carroll, called for a pass play, leaving Lynch — and ultimately the rest of the Seahawks — stunningly empty-handed.

It also added Bevell and Carroll to the long list of sportsmen whose decisions backfired so spectacularly so as to haunt and taunt the also-rans and their crestfallen fans.

Some choices that stand out for their deleterious results:

Meadowlands miracle: In the final seconds of a 1978 NFL game, all the New York Giants had to do was take a knee and they had the Philadelphia Eagles beaten. But they inexplicably called a running play and quarterback Joe Pisarcik botched the handoff. Defensive back Herman Edwards scooped up the loose ball and scored the winning touchdown.

Pooped Pedro: Just five outs from guiding Boston to the World Series, manager Grady Little left an exhausted Pedro Martinez in Game 7 of the 2003 AL Champi-

onship Series. Martinez had just given up three consecutive hits and was clearly done. After Little returned to the dugout without his ace, Jorge Posada hit the game-winning double and the Red Sox went on to lose. The curse lived on for another year.

Best benched: While Al Michaels was shouting, "Do you believe in miracles? Yes!" Soviet hockey fans on Feb. 22, 1980, were asking, "Why isn't Vladislav Tretiak between the pipes? No!" Soviet coach Victor Tikhonov benched the world's best goaltender with the score tied at 2 after the first period. The American team made up of mostly college kids capitalized against backup Vladimir Myslkin to beat the mighty Soviets 4-3 in the "Miracle on Ice."

Vexed Van de Velde: Needing just a double bogey to win the 1999 British Open, Frenchman Jean Van de Velde decided not to play things conservatively and triple bogeyed the 18th hole, forcing a three-way playoff with Paul Lawrie and Justin Leonard that he lost. The lasting image from golf's biggest implosion was Van de Velde slipping off his socks and shoes and stepping into the knee-deep water to reclaim his shot.

Fab Five fail: Chris Webber's Michigan Wolverines trailed North Carolina 73-71 in the closing seconds of the 1993 NCAA men's basketball championship when he found himself double-teamed and called a timeout. Because Michigan had no timeouts left, Webber was assessed a technical foul and the Tar Heels cruised to the title.

Seattle's Carroll stands by decision

By TIM BOOTH
The Associated Press

PHOENIX — Less than 16 hours later, Seahawks coach Pete Carroll was still stunned by the outcome while defending the decision to call a pass from the 1-yard line in the Super Bowl's closing seconds, a choice that will long be debated.

So close to another celebration. So close to becoming the next NFL dynasty.

"The shock of disappointment that this game gets away from us and goes another way right at the finish line," a somber Carroll said Monday, before Seattle returned to the Pacific Northwest after the 28-24 loss to New England. "It's something that we have to deal with that in the long run of it will make us stronger, and we'll be able to put it in some kind of perspective. It's pretty hard right now."

Carroll stood by the decision for Russell Wilson to throw from the New England 1 with 26 seconds left, a pass that was intended for Ricardo Lockette and intercepted by Malcolm Butler.

Carroll also defended offensive coordinator Darrell Bevell, who was widely criticized for calling a pass with Marshawn Lynch in the Seattle backfield.

"We're so lucky to have him. He's been absolutely instrumental in everything that we have done," Carroll said. "There is no reservation in that thought, and don't make it out like there is, because he is an awesome guy on our staff, and he is crucially important to our future as well." Carroll said the clock and the Seahawks' timeout situation dictated they would have to throw once and possibly twice from the 1. He gave credit to Butler for making the interception and fellow cornerback Brandon Browner for jamming up wide receiver Jermaine Kearse on the play, creating open space for Butler to break on the ball.

Seattle decided to throw after seeing New England bring in its goal-line defenders, Carroll said. The Seahawks were also attempting to melt as much time from the clock with Tom Brady standing on the other sideline.



MICHAEL CONROY/AP

Seattle coach Pete Carroll has been second-guessed for the Seahawks' final offensive play, which resulted in an interception at the Patriots' goal line.

SPORTS



Defending the pass
Carroll stands by decision on throw that cost Seahawks title » **Page 31**

NBA

Streak over



GERALD HERBERT/AP

Pelicans forward Anthony Davis dunks on the Hawks on Monday in New Orleans. The Pelicans ended the Hawks' franchise-record winning streak with a 115-100 victory.

Davis scores 29 to help Pelicans snap Hawks' winning run at 19 games

BY BRETT MARTEL
The Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — Paul Millsap and his Atlanta teammates didn't sound terribly concerned about the end of the Hawks' franchise-record 19-game winning streak.

After all, the Hawks' 115-100 loss to surging New Orleans on Monday night — in a game marked by Anthony Davis'

ferocious play — was only Atlanta's third defeat in 36 games.

"We've got a lot of season left," Millsap said when asked to put the recent winning streak in perspective. "Nineteen games, that's good. We lost one — 19-1 now. So it's just regrouping. ... We can't let one loss turn into two losses."

Davis, returning from a left groin strain

that sidelined him one game, had 29 points and 13 rebounds to help the Pelicans win for the sixth time in seven games. New Orleans' recent run of good form has included victories over other contending squads, such as Dallas and the Los Angeles Clippers, and has pulled the Pelicans (26-22) within a game of Phoenix (28-22) for eighth place in the Western Conference.

"We just need to continue to do what we've been doing," Davis said. "The past couple games, we've been rebounding, defending, sharing the ball. We don't care who scores. That's what we have to do."

That sounds a lot like the recipe Atlanta has been using to pile up an Eastern Conference-leading 40 victories.

SEE STREAK ON PAGE 26

Judge in Hernandez murder trial closes court over juror issue » **Page 25**

Injured ski stars, hometown star Vonn ready for world championships » **Page 24**



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